

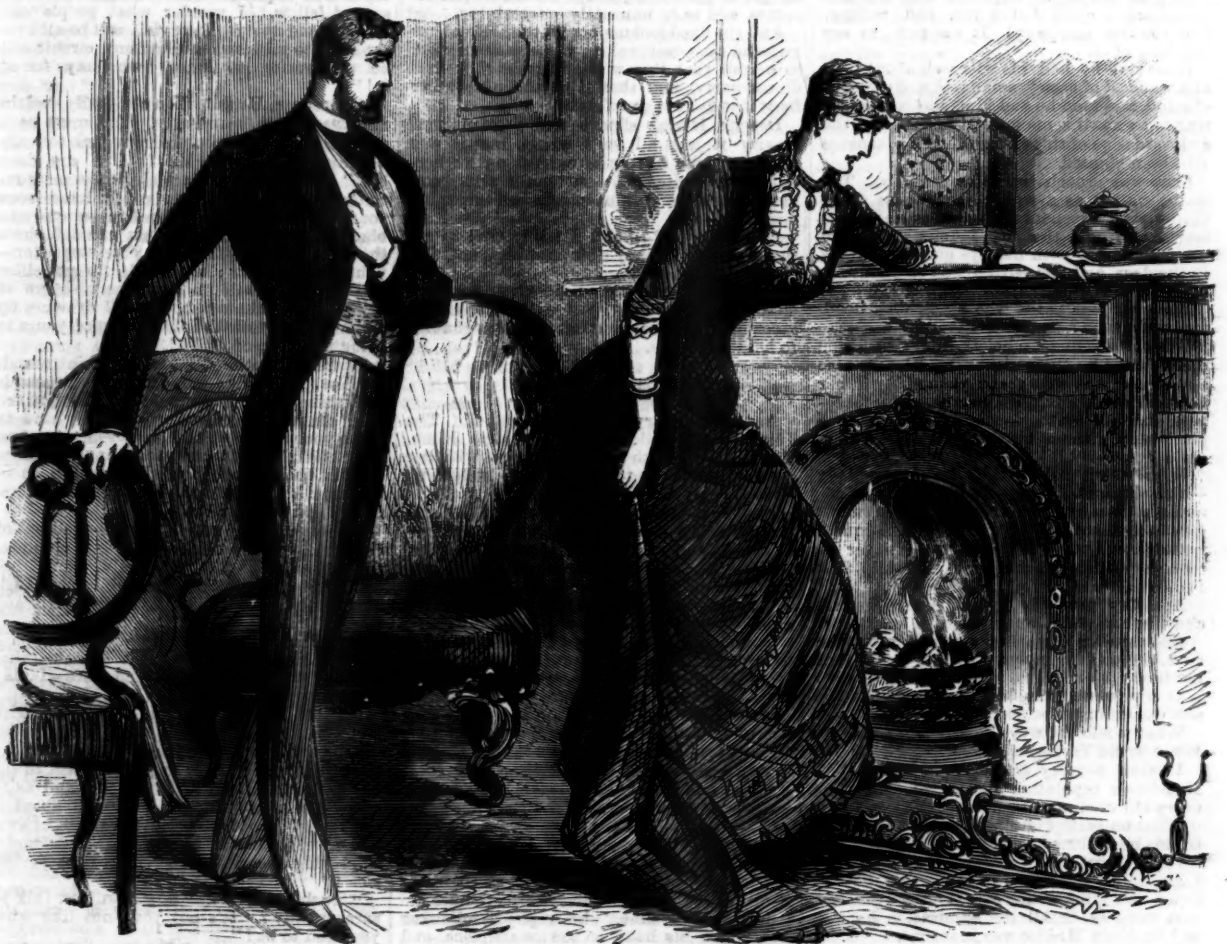
THE  
**LONDON READER**  
of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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No. 1125.—VOL XLIV.

FOR THE WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 22, 1884.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[“I HAVE COME TO SAY MY LAST WORD. YOU WILL, OR I WILL, TELL YOUR FATHER THE TRUTH BEFORE TO-MORROW NIGHT.”]

**MADELINE GRANT.**

**CHAPTER XXVI.**

A DAPPER man-servant (hired) next came upon the scene, and his amazement was no less profound, though more skilfully concealed.

He looked politely at Madeline, and said, in his most proper and parrot-like tone of voice.—

“Who shall I say, me’am?”

“Say,” returned Madeline, giving her hair a little pat and the lace of her dress a little twitch, “say”—smiling to herself—“Miss Grant.”

“Miss Grant,” shouted the waiter, flinging the door back with a violence that nearly rent it from its ancient hinges, and then stood back, eager to witness the effect of his announcement upon the company.

Madeline was scarcely more surprised than they were. She beheld a round table, decorated with flowers, and lit with wax candles—really a most civilised-looking little dinner table, the

room well lit up, and looking quite respectable, and seated at the table Hugh and two other men, one of whom she knew.

Horror! this was a great deal more than she had bargained for, and it was too late to fly. She never dreamt of dropping in like this upon a cosy little bachelor party!

And who shall paint their amazement? They were chatting away, just between the soup and fish, and Hugh had been regretting the absence (through illness) of No. 4, whose vacant place awaited him. There had been a little professional disunion, an allusion to a big fire, a commendation of some excellent dry sherry, and they were all very sociable and comfortable, when the door was flung wide open, and Miss Grant was announced in a stentorian voice. And who the deuce was Miss Grant? They all looked up, and saw a young lady in full evening dress, literally blazing with diamonds, standing rather hesitatingly just within the doorway.

“It was Madeline,” said Hugh, to himself.

Madeline, looking like some young goddess, but surely Madeline gone mad!

What could he say? what could he do? He might cut the Gordian knot by saying, “Gentlemen, this beautiful girl, who has suddenly dropped as it were from the clouds, is Mrs. Glyn—my wife,” if she had not heralded her entrance by her maiden name.

He might have done this, but now as matters stood what was he to do? He must do something. His friends were looking at him appealingly. They evidently thought that there had been some mistake.

“Miss Grant,” he said, suddenly, pushing back his chair, and rising, “this is indeed an unexpected honour. What can I do for you? Nothing wrong, I hope?” approaching and shaking hands.

“No, no,” trying to be calm, and casting frantically about for some plausible excuse. “I thought I should have found you alone”—colouring—“I mean disengaged, and I wished to consult you—on—on—business—a matter—of—business.”

“If you will honour me by taking a seat at table and dining with us, Miss Grant, I shall be quite at your service afterwards,” said



Hugh, conducting her to the vacant place opposite his own. "May I introduce Mr. Treherne, a friend of mine (the gentleman who had seen her at the window, and who hugged himself as he noted the fact), and Mr. Fitzroy."

"I think Miss Grant and I have met before," said Mr. Fitzroy, smiling, and bowing as he rose, like Mr. Treherne, and then subsided once more into his chair.

This was nuts! The beautiful Miss Grant dining on the sly at Glyn's chambers, and Glyn such a quiet fellow too, and finding, to her horror, company! It was rum, to say the least of it.

However, he had his wife well about him, and was full of society small talk and presence of mind, and soon he and Madeline were chatting away about some mutual friends, and the awkward edge of this extraordinary adventure had been blunted.

Soup was brought back for the lady. The waiter waited, as a waiter should wait. The dinner was excellent (from a neighbouring restaurant), and the good landress watched the proceedings with her eye glued to a crack in the door, and allowed no look or gesture to escape her.

She owed this to the whole neighbourhood, for surely such a sight was never seen.

The three young bachelors in their evening dress sitting by themselves was all very nice and proper, but this grand young lady in her lace and diamonds, with her beautiful face—yes, and her blushes—coming and taking a place among them unasked—what could it mean?

It was surely not the thing for a young lady—and she looked that—to be coming alone, and, in fact, to chambers in the Temple, especially to see Mr. Glyn! for of all the quiet, reasonable like young men, who never as much as looked at a lady, this beat all! that it did!

And how grave he looked, though he was chatting away pleasant enough.

And thus we leave her with her eye to the door, thoroughly enjoying herself for once in her life.

It was more than Mr. Glyn was doing, he was exceedingly uncomfortable.

What would Fitzroy think of Miss Grant? What would Treherne think?

If such a story got out round the clubs, Madeline's reputation was at the mercy of every old woman in London.

What on earth did she mean by walking in at this hour alone, and dressed as if she was going to Court?

He stole a glance at her as she was chatting away, now quite at her ease, to Mr. Treherne, who was looking all the admiration he felt, and no doubt Maddie was beautiful.

What a complexion, what eyes, what beautifully chiselled features, all set off by dress and diamonds, and youth and happiness!

She looked happy enough.

"Who would dream," he said to himself, as he slowly cracked his walnuts, "that she was the same Maddie that two years previously had been Miss Selina's slave, and had attracted his notice and his pity in her darning and shabby black gown? What a change was here! Or that she was the Maddie who had pawned her very dress off her back not a whole year ago! It could not be!"

He looked at her again. The idea of such a thing was simply grotesque nonsense. She—this brilliant being who had suddenly descended upon his humble dinner-party—had surely never been his hard-working, struggling wife? If she had, he could not realize it.

This magnificent-looking young lady felt to him like a stranger, with this lace and diamonds, this low bodice, and this fair rounded neck, and beautifully moulded arms.

This, too, was quite a woman, a girl of the world. She had accommodated herself to the situation most marvellously.

There she sat, this beautiful and unobtruded young person, dining with these bachelors, in a bachelor's quarters in the

Temple, with as much ease and sang froid as if it were an everyday and most conventional occurrence.

She was far more at home, to an inexperienced eye, than he was.

The truth was that, the first shock recovered, the young lady was actually enjoying herself very much indeed.

She liked the *risqué*, unusual situation—her two most amusing, clever, mystified supporters on either hand, who were doing their very utmost to pretend to take it all as a matter-of-course, and to be unusually entertaining.

And she liked looking across the table at her husband's handsome gloomy face, and remarked to herself that this was positively their first dinner-party, and that it should not be her fault if it did not go off well.

Despite Hugh's silence and preternatural gravity it was all very wrong, but it was charming, she felt quite carried out of herself with excitement and high spirits, and more than once the idea had flashed across her mind—

"Shall I tell?—Shall I tell? Oh! to see their faces when they hear that I am actually Mrs. Glyn!"

But Madeline was not very good at "telling," as we know, and without any very great amount of self-restraint she was enabled to hold her peace.

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

ALL went merry as a marriage bell. The dinner was excellent; there was no hitch. The landlady (with interstices) spent with her eye to the crack in the door, safely brought up course after course.

Now they had successfully reached dessert; had discussed many phases of last season—Madeline and Mr. Fitzroy, pictures, oddities, beauties, dances—Mr. Treherne and Hugh playing the part of staid ones.

Then Mr. Treherne had his turn, and made most of the company roar with one or two well-told witty narratives, and then it occurred to the two gentleman guests that the lady had come for an audience, that it was nine o'clock, and making one or more lame excuses, which, however, were very readily accepted, they looked at each other, rose rather reluctantly, and with a deferential leave-taking of Miss Grant, and a "By-by, old chap," to their host, effected their exit, leaving, had they but known it, Mr. and Mrs. Glyn *à tête à tête*, and alone.

"Well, Hugh," exclaimed Madeline, with her usual sprightly and animated air, pushing back her chair, rising slowly, and trailing herself and her long train towards the fire.

"Well, Madeline," he replied, following her, laying his hand on the mantelpiece, and looking as severe as if he were going to cross-examine a witness for the defence, "what does this mean? Have you taken leave of your senses? Have you gone mad?"

"Not I!" she returned, scoldily, putting one foot upon the fender. "Papa is away; won't be back till the small hours, and I—I took it into my head I would make myself very fine and come over here in a hansom and give you an agreeable surprise. But," with a pout, "seemingly it has been a surprise only; the word agreeable we may leave out."

"You may," he said, roughly. "I wonder you have not more sense. If you had given me a hint that you were coming—if you had even had yourself announced by your own lawful name, but to come masquerading here as Miss Grant, is—too much; and I tell you honestly, Madeline, that I won't have it! What must those fellows have thought of you to-night? Fitzroy will blazon it all over London! Have you no regard for your reputation—your good name?"

"There, there, Hugh, my dear," spreading out both her pretty hands with a gesture of deprecation, "that is scolding enough—that will do!"

"No, it won't do," he replied, angrily. "I really am coming to think that you look upon

me, Maddie, as a poor, weak-minded idiot. There's not another man in Great Britain would have stood as much as I have done; and I've had about enough of it!" with a wave of his hand in his turn. "This visit of yours is positively the last straw. If you have no regard for Miss Grant's good name, please think of mine. I do not choose to have gaily-dressed young ladies coming flaunting into my lumber chambers at any and every hour of the day. I've been hitherto considered a quiet, hard-working, respectable sort of fellow. I wonder what people will think of me now? Your visit will be all over the town to-morrow, and half my circuit will be clamouring to know 'who my friend is!'"

"Nonsense, Hugh! You can easily explain me away most beautifully. You must be a very bad lawyer if you are not equal to such a trifling occasion as this! Oh! my dear boy," laughing immoderately at the mere recollection, "I wish you could have seen your own face when I walked in—a study in black. Come now, Hugh, you can tell them that I'm a client—that I'm your stepister—your sister-in-law; any little fib you like, and as you so seldom have the pleasure of my society, make much of me," drawing up a chair, "and tell that old woman of yours to bring me a cup of coffee!"

There was nothing like taking high ground. "Yes, presently; but before that there is something more important that I have to tell you," also sitting down. "You will have to make your choice at once between your two characters, Madeline; we won't have any more of this shilly-shallying. You will have to be either Miss Grant or Mrs. Glyn—permanently and publicly."

A pause, during which a cinder fell out of the grate, and the clock ticked sixty seconds; then Madeline, who positively would not have believed, she told herself, that Hugh could be so bearish, plucked up spirit and said,—

"I will be both for the present, and soon I will be Mrs. Glyn only. As it is, I think—what with my visits to Holt-hill and here—I play my part splendidly."

"There you must permit me to differ with you," said her husband, in a frosty voice. "The part as a wife you have played for the last many months has, to put the case in the mildest form, not been a success; and as to your rôle of mother, the less said about it the better. No doubt you are brilliant as a daughter, and make up for your deficiencies in playing the rich man's heiress to perfection!"

"Hugh!" sighs, "how can you talk so sarcastically? It's not you—not like what you used to be!"

"No, very probably not. But since you are so much changed, you need not be surprised if I am changed. I am not going to be put off with words any longer, Maddie. You can't run with the hare and hunt with the hounds; you must return at once. Tell your father the truth, or let me tell him the truth, and make your choice between us. This double life, where all of it is spent in one sphere, and but the shadow left to another, won't do. Think of your child," with rising heat, "growing up a stranger to his own mother. Poor little chap, he knows none but Mrs. Holt. I—I try and see him as often as I can; but what am I? I am only a man, and not much of a hand with small children. Madeline, this money has poisoned your nature. You are no more, what you once were—"

"Don't say it, Hugh!" she cried, standing up, and laying her hand on his wrist. "I have been really, really waiting and hoping to bring you and my father quietly together. I see I have been wrong in all this horrid pre-arrangement. I—I will tell him to-morrow—there is my hand on it—and if he turns me out of doors, as is very possible, I shall be sitting here and making your tea to-morrow evening. You believe me, Hugh?" standing



over him, as he leant his head on his hand and looked into the fire, as if he only had half heard what she said. "You believe me, don't you?" she repeated, eagerly.

"There have been so many to-morrows, Madeline. I'm like the men in the fable about the boy and the wolves, but," suddenly, as it were, pulling himself together, "I will believe you—and trust you," standing up and confronting her. "And now," ringing the bell as he spoke, "you shall have your coffee, and then I'll take you home in a hansom."

"Home! It's too early yet—only half-past nine! The pantomimes are going on. Take me to the theatre for an hour. It will be such fun!"

"Fun, Madeline! I wonder at you! Supposing anyone was to see you—any of your friends, what would they think? They do not know that I am your husband; they would only take me for some admirer who was persisting on your father's absence to take you to the theatre alone on the sly."

"And what harm? I like positing people—I like to give them something to talk of!" she returned, readily.

"But I do not, and I suppose I know a little more of the world than you do. You seem to consider it rather a joke to play with your good name, as it were, with cap and bells; to fling it down to be torn to pieces out of pure wantonness; but I shall not permit it!"

"How! How! How! You talk! Just like some old fogey laying down the law. You are not old when you are like this," pointing a finger at him.

"Nor are you; when you are like that," pointing to his turn at her lace and diamonds, "at least not in my eyes."

"Oh, hal!" resolved not to be put out of count with herself. "You know very well that I look lovely, and that you admire me more than you can say; and you are going to take me to the pantomime now. But," laying her hand on his arm, "oh," with a little start, "there is the coffee," as the landlady, who insisted upon doing this errand in person in order to have what she called "a rare good look," fumbled at the door, pushed it open with her knee, and marched in carrying a small tray, and laid it very slowly on the table, her eyes all the while being fixed on the figure of the young lady standing by the fire.

The lady had her face turned away, but Mr. Glyn, who was leaning his head in his hand and his elbow on the mantelpiece, eyed her steadily, and said, in a low civil tone than usual—

"There, Mrs. Watts, that will do. You need not wait. Call a hansom when you go downstairs," and Mrs. Watts, reluctantly backed herself out.

She had seen a good deal, but she was as much at sea as ever.

The young lady had had her hand on Mr. Glyn's arm when she went in, and was saying—

"You know that you admire me more than you can say, and that you are going to take me to the pantomime."

Was ever such a brazen piece! He had his head turned a way, and looked as if he had much rather have her room than her company.

The young ladies of the present time ran after the men, and no mistake. It seemed to her it was a kind of scandalous—the haystack after the cow. Supposing this young lady's people was to get to know of her coming after Mr. Glyn like this? Mr. Glyn of all people! It was everything that Mrs. Watts had ever come across into a cooked hat.

A few minutes later they were coming down the stairs, Miss all wrapped up in a long seal-skin coat (which seal-skin coat Mrs. Watts, sliding into the outer office, had done herself the pleasure of examining, and, low be it spoken, trying on).

"None of your palmeto things, but a long

coat, down right the door, all lined with satin, scented with some sweet perfume."

Mrs. Watts, being of low stature, was lost in it, but the short time she was enveloped in this one hundred guinea wrap was undoubtedly one of her happiest moments.

It did not appear to be one of Mr. Glyn's happiest moments as he pulled on his great coat, and followed this dainty, tripping, high-heeled steps of his beautiful visitor downstairs.

Mrs. Watts, who had hung about the door below, remarked to herself that she never remembered to see him looking so black as he followed his companion into the hansom, and said to the driver—

"Haymarket Theatre."

So she had got her way, thought Mrs. Watts, as she stood boldly on the threshold, and looked after him; and she had. Hugh was taking her to the pantomime, after all, but under protest.

"You know, my dear Hugh," she had said, "it's very wrong of you to be so grumpy and so gloomy. Think of all I am going to give up to-morrow for your sake—all this," holding out her lace skirt, and touching her diamond necklace.

"You might, I think, please me for the last time I shall be playing as the Fairy Princess before I go back to my rage. No, no," colouring, and picking herself up, "I did not mean to say that; but when this is my very last appearance in my present character I think, Hugh, you might indulge me. I've set my heart on seeing *Bluebird*, and we will compromise for a good share of it yet."

"Well, I suppose, then, under the circumstances, that you must have your way," said her husband, yielding reluctantly. "If you sit still in the chair in a box you may not be seen," taking a last look from a nail as he spoke. "Something tells me, all the same, that this will not be your last appearance in this character, not that I mean to doubt your good intentions, Madeline, or to disbelieve your word, but I have a presentiment, that I cannot account for, that, far from your sitting here to-morrow evening, as you said you would, making tea, our lives will somehow have drifted further apart than that ever."

"Nonsense! Fancy a clever man like you—and I hear you are very clever, Hugh—believing in such foolish things as presentiments!" said Madeline, as she set down her coffee cup with a laugh. "Now go and bring me my coat. Thank goodness, I have a splendid outfit, if the worst comes to the worst. Let us start. I know you are trying to get Miss Grant out of your room."

The Glyn's were not so very late, after all, and stepped into a box overlooking the stage (when all the audience had their eyes and ears occupied with Sister Ann's dance and song).

Madeline removed her cloak, and took a seat with her back to the house, having glanced round with affected nervousness, and said to her companion, in a smothered whisper—

"Sister Ann, Sister Ann, do you see anybody looking? Do you think anybody knows me? There are the Mowbrays, and there is," frowning, "Lord Robert Montagu. I can see them, but they cannot see me, so do not be nervous, my dear and exceedingly proper Hugh!"

Hugh had seen some familiar faces, too, and one man in a box over against him had palpably recognised him; but that did not much matter, as he could not possibly identify Madeline.

Madeline whispered, and laughed, and talked to him behind her fan, and Hugh, putting his gloomy prognostications to one side, and nodding himself to the occasion, and told himself that he was a brute to be so gruff and irreproachable to the beautiful girl opposite to him, although he could hardly realise the fact that she was his wife (as he glanced at her just at this special moment as she sat with her head resting on her hand,

jewels glistening in her ears, on her arms, neck hair; a smile on her lips, no wedding-ring on her finger), his own Madeline!

So he, too, laughed and talked in a low voice, and whispered his hopes, and fears, and plans, and forgot entirely what bitter, wounded feelings he had been lately nursing with regard to his pretty vis à vis; and Madeline declared to herself that Hugh would make a very ideal sort of lover, and they had had none of that, they were married so suddenly, and she began to think that this hasty marriage had defrauded her of what is the most agreeable part of a girl's life, to wish that she was not actually married to Hugh yet, and that all she wanted was to come.

The man in the box opposite, who was surprised, indeed, to see Glyn at the theatre, told himself that it was not to another man that he was thus bending tenderly forward, and stooping his head as if to listen to something very particular from time to time.

Ah, no, he thought not, as presently a very pretty hand, wrist and arm emerged from the shadow of the curtain, and lay upon the velvet cushion.

He snatched up his excellent opera-glasses, and noted the diamond bracelet, the diamond rings—but, no, there was not a wedding one amongst them!

The Glyn's patiently waited till the last, but even so, when they went out into the lobby a good many people were still to be seen, and Madeline and Hugh were rather a remarkable-looking couple.

Although the latter tried to draw her lace handkerchief or start well over her head she was recognised.

Hugh was recognised both by their own friends—why is there always some one to see you when you don't want to be seen? and when you especially wish to be observed there is never any one forthcoming in the same way.

Mr. Fitzroy and Mr. Treherne were standing under the pillars as Madeline passed to a hansom, and wished her a cheerful good-night.

Hugh did not accompany her—it would not be safe, so she said she must get home very quickly before her father returned, and were she to be seen coming back under the care of a stranger?

"All right, all right, Madeline—but it's the last time," winking her hand. "Remember, to-morrow. Send me a note, and I shall come for you."

Then with a gesture of farewell he stepped back, and she was quickly wheeled away.

Mr. Treherne and Mr. Fitzroy were still endeavouring to light up, and had not yet started to walk. The night was fine and frosty, and they had not far to go.

"I'm coming your way," he said; "hold on a minute till I get out my cigar-case."

And so the trio were walking homewards briskly over the frosty pavements, discussing the pantomime, the successes, the audience, but not a word, of course, dropped from either gentlemen's lips with regard to Glyn's lady guest, although, like the parrot, they thought the more.

Glyn was a reserve kind of chap, and no one ever dreamt of picking their noses into his affairs, as a candid reply or a painful snub was sure to be all they would gain by the experiment.

Nevertheless, they yearned to know more about Miss Grant, the beauty whose fame had spread far and near, whose riches and whose accomplishments in different to the advances of the most eligible parties were proverbial.

What on earth had she to do with a poor hard working barrister like Glyn, they had a feel each other, after they had left the couple alone at home. Business?

It was strange that she should pitch on such an hour, and such an uncommonly handsome fellow as Glyn for her family adviser; and the funny part of it all was that Glyn was by

no means in ecstasies with her, and treated her very coolly.

Talking of limelight, fires in theatres, and such like topics brought the trio to Mr. Fitzroy's chambers.

"Come up, you fellows, and have some devilled bones," he said, hospitably, "the night is young."

Mr. Treherne was never deaf to such appeals, like Glyn; but Glyn on this occasion, much to his friend's surprise, said,—

"All right; I'll just come up for a minute," and sprang up the stairs two steps at a time. "I'm not going to stay," he said, taking off his hat, and standing with his back to Mr. Fitzroy's fire, still in his top-coat; "but I've just a word to say to you two fellows. I want to ask you as a favour to me to say nothing about having met Miss Grant in my chambers or in my company."

The two guests muttered "Of course" and "Certainly not," not with any great alacrity. This demand was decidedly a blow, for they were only human, and were looking forward to mentioning the news with pleasurable anticipation.

"When I ask you to do me this favour," he continued, as coolly as if he were speaking in court; "I think it right to take you into my confidence, and to tell you our secret. Miss Grant and I were married more than two years ago—she is my wife!"

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

MR. GRANT had "come in," and gone to bed, so Miss Grant was respectfully informed by the "Bishop."

He had asked for her, and he had told him that he believed she had gone out to spend the evening with Lady Rachel Jones.

Madeline again breathed freely, and hurried up to her own room, almost afraid of encountering her parent on the stairs and being rigidly cross-examined then and there.

"But Mr. Grant had gone to bed ill, complaining of his chest and throat"; so said Josephine; and there was no chance of his being loitering about the passages in the draughts.

Madeline sat long over her fire, wondering how she would tell him, and when she would tell him her great piece of news? It must be done to-morrow! Hugh was evidently serious.

She had not thought that Hugh had it in him to be so strict and so stern. Well, well, she wished it was over, well over; this time to-morrow it would be done—would she be here? looking regretfully round.

"Perhaps this," she said to herself, half aloud, "is the very last time I shall sit at this fire, the last time I shall have a maid to lay out my things and brush my hair. Heigho! I wish—no, no, I don't wish I had not married Hugh, but there is no harm in wishing that he was rich."

Madeline's anticipation of her coming interview kept her awake for hours; her heart kept beating so loudly that it would not suffer her to sleep; and it was really morning when she fell into a troubled dose, from which she was awake by Josephine, with an unusually long face, and no morning tea in her hand.

"Miss Grant," she said, "your father is very ill, so his nurse says, and I've come for you. The doctor has been sent for. They say its inflammation of the lungs."

Madeline sprang out of bed at once, and huddled on some clothes and went off at once to her parent's room.

He was very ill, in high fever, his breath coming hurriedly thick and fast, his hands burning. It was as Josephine had said, "inflammation of the lungs."

"A very sharp attack," the doctor confided to Madeline.

It had come to a head with extraordinary rapidity, and he would like another opinion, and she must get a professional nurse.

"Was—was he dangerously ill?" she ventured to ask, with bated breath.

"Well, there was no use in concealing the truth, it was a grave case; but he had often pulled people through worse. She need not think that, because her father was suffering from acute inflammation, that—that—" And he left her to fill up the blank herself, not daring to mention the ugly word "death."

And thus Madeline's confession was postponed *sine die*.

She felt that she had been deprived.

She wrote, of course, and told Hugh the state of the case, and sent him almost daily bulletins about the patient's health; and all through February she scarcely went out-of-doors or left her father's sick room.

He was ably nursed. He was wiry, and he struggled back to a very trying, peevish convalescence, and early in March was ordered off to the Riviera at once.

He was feeble still, and still an invalid; but he was much better, and able to dine in a snug sitting-room, fitted up near his bed-chamber.

He was to go to the Riviera, and, of course, he was not to go alone.

Madeline was to accompany him, but what would Hugh say to this?

In her father's present precarious state of health she could not tell him her news, it would be so great a shock; and yet she almost dreaded facing her husband with yet another excuse.

Hugh was not to be trifled with, still less her father.

"What an unlucky girl she was," she said to herself, tearfully.

Between these two men, who had such claims upon her, what was she to do? which was to be sacrificed—father or husband? And then there was Harry!

Circumstances put a tremendous pressure upon her, circumstances in the shape of the doctors, her father, and her fears, and she allowed herself as usual to drift.

It was quite settled that she was to go to Nice, and remain there till June, taking care of her father.

She had no opening, no excuse in the character of Miss Grant. Go she must, but in her character of Mrs. Glyn, considering that her father was now fairly convalescent.

What about her in the character of Mrs. Glyn? and what about her husband and her child?

She dared not again (as Miss Grant) venture to the Temple, so she wrote a very affectionate, pleading little letter, putting everything before him in the very strongest light, as soon from her father's side, and begging and imploring of him to be patient just a little longer, till her father could bear the news, and to wait.

To this letter she received no reply; no answer for three whole days; no reply for a week.

She went to number two and asked, personally, no letter, and yet he was in town.

Mr. Jessop had called—Mr. Jessop had often called—and told her that Hugh was shortly going on circuit, and that he had dined with him at his club the previous evening, and that he was working too hard.

Mr. Jessop felt a certain cynical pleasure in watching both "hands" in this curious game.

"It was ten times better than any novel going," he repeatedly told himself.

To see little—no, she was not little, but young—Mrs. Glyn once, and to see her now, was really a most startling contrast.

And to see Hugh working away like a horse in a mill was another fine sight, looked at from a professional point of view.

And to see a couple once so devoted so absolutely indifferent to one another, so totally divided by that great gulf—wealth—this was the strangest sight of all.

The day before Madeline and her father took their departure for the sunny south—where he and she and half a dozen fashionable visitors were sitting in the drawing-room—the shaded lamps were already lighted, the fragrant five o'clock tea was being dispensed

by Madeline, who was not, as Lady Rachel remarked to many, in her usual good spirits.

Lady Rachel was present; she had thrown off her furs. She had secured a comfortable seat in a becoming light, and she was flirting audaciously with Mr. Fitzroy.

Lord Robert Montagu was also present; come to make his adieu, for he found old Grant still a most useful acquaintance; and he and his friends were discoursing together in low tones.

Lady Rachel was laughing uproariously; two ladies were comparing notes with regard to their dressmakers; two gentlemen were devoting themselves to the fair tea-maker, who, in a close-fitting brown velvet dress, was looking unusually charming, when the door was flung open with a flourish, and James announced (little knowing what he was doing),—

"Mr. Glyn!"

This name was just that out of one of the ordinary callers—one of the multitude who flocked to see his daughter—in Mr. Grant's ears; in fact, in everyone's ears excepting two pair, i.e., Mr. Fitzroy's and Mrs. Glyn's.

She felt as if she had been turned to stone. Had Hugh come to claim her?

The hand that held the sugar-tongs actually became rigid with fear.

She glanced at her father; he, poor man, was totally unconscious of the crisis, and little dreamt that the unusually distinguished, good-looking young gentleman now shaking hands with Madeline was actually his son-in-law!

How do you do?" faltered Miss Grant, raising an appealing, half-terrified look to the stranger. "Papa, let me introduce you to Mr. Glyn."

Mr. Glyn shook hands, uttered a few commonplace to the invalid, and stood talking to him for some time.

Mr. Grant noticed with pleasure the air of refinement and of good blood (which he adored) in this young man's eye and air and carriage.

No one guessed at the situation except Fitzroy; his breath was simply taken away. He gasped perceptibly; he looked, he gaped, he said the same thing over four times to the disgusted Lady Rachel, who began to think that the agreeable Mr. Fitzroy was a fool.

To see Miss Grant thus calmly (to him at a distance it looked so) introduce her husband thus to her father, completely, as he afterwards confided to Mr. Treherne, floored him.

And the old chap as innocent as an infant, and Glyn as cool as an cucumber—as self-possessed as it was possible to be.

He unintentionally ousted Lord Robert, and succeeded to his place. Mr. Grant invited him to sit near him, and to tell him "if there was anything going on—anything in the evening papers." He had taken a fancy to Mr. Glyn, and he did not often fall in love at first sight.

Madeline looked on, as she handed her husband a cup of tea by her father's order, with amazement and trepidation, in equal greatness to see Hugh and her father amiably talking politics, and being both (providentially, as it happened) of the same party was to her almost as startling, as if an actual miracle had been performed in the drawing-room before her eyes.

That her eyes strayed that way repeatedly did not escape sharp Lord Robert. He had always been looking out for her husband. Could this be him? But, no! this fellow was only too presentable; he was evidently one of the Glyns of Car-Glyn. He himself saw the family likeness—he was thoroughly at his ease. He scarcely noticed Miss Grant, though she looked often enough at him, and looked unusually pale and agitated, and talked nonsense, and filled the cups at random.

No, no! this man was not the mysterious husband. No such luck for Miss Grant; and if he had been he never would have had the nerve to walk thus boldly and alone into the



very lion's den. But he probably knew Miss Grant's husband—that was it.

Having thus disposed of this question to his own complete satisfaction, and carefully studied Mr. Glyn from the parting of his hair to the buttons of his boots, Lord Robert sauntered gracefully over to talk a little to one of the ladies—a well-jointed widow, Lady Rachel, who had become disgusted with her present companion, now rose, and on pretence of sitting beside Mr. Grant, and “having a chat” with him, managed to renew her acquaintance with Mr. Glyn, and chattered away to him volubly, though now and then Mr. Grant, who was far on the road to recovery, insisted on having his say; and as he talked Hugh had time to take in the magnificent surroundings—the lofty rooms, the silken hangings, the priceless old china and water-colours, the loads of exotic flowers, the velvet pile carpets. Wealth—wealth everywhere—Madeline in a velvet gown, sitting in the midst of it all, mistress of all she surveyed, with a young lord and a young baronet absolutely hanging on her words.

“It was for this, for a life composed of this,”—looking about, and taking in footmen, pictures, diamonds, silver tea equipage, titled friends, &c., &c., in one searching glance—“that she had deserted—yes, that was the proper word—deserted him and poor little Harry!”

#### CHAPTER XXIX.

MR. GRANT and Mr. Glyn had apparently an inexhaustible capital of conversation, and still kept up the ball as other people went away one after the other. Madeline knew that Hugh meant to sit them out, for as he laid down his cup and saucer close to her, he had mentioned in a whisper, audible to her ear only,—

“I’m going to wait; I must have a word with you alone.”

After a time, when he was positively the last visitor, and the clock was now pointing to half-past six, he, too, rose, and took leave of Mr. Grant and Madeline, who, instead of ringing the bell, walked with him to the door, and saying airily to her father,—

“I’m just going to show Mr. Glyn that picture of ‘Meissonnier’s’ in the drawing-room. He is very fond of paintings, and I’ll be back directly,” effecting her escape at the same moment, and opening a door close by waved her husband through, saying,—

“In here—in here; the picture is there. Come along, and stand before it; and, now, what is it?”

The room was badly lit, and there was not much light upon the “Meissonnier,” but that did not in the least matter to Hugh, as we know. He, however, took his stand before it, and looking at his companion gravely, said quietly,—

“All right. I’ve come in person to answer your letter.”

“I never knew of such rashness, Hugh,” she ejaculated. “Talk of my going to your chambers—it was nothing; but to venture here!” shaking her head with a tragic gesture, and throwing up her eyes and hand.

“Positively, when I saw you walk in I thought I should have fainted.”

“However, luckily you did not. I certainly scarcely expected to see your father, from your account of him. However, I have at last made his acquaintance, and he seems not such a terrible person after all. He was very pleasant and agreeable to me, as you saw. I do not think that your disclosure will have the awful consequences you anticipate, and I am perfectly certain that it will be attended with no ill-effects as regards his health. You are too much afraid of him. You have taken quite a wrong estimate of his character. He may fly into a fury just at first—I fancy that you may expect that; but he will calm down, and we shall all be very good friends; and I’m certain he will be delighted with Harry.”

“I’m not at all so certain of that; he does

not like children,” returned his daughter, decidedly, “and you have not told me yet, Hugh—and we have no time to lose—what has brought you here?”

“I came, as I said before, to answer your letter in person. I am glad I have done so. I’ve seen more than I expected, and I can understand some things quite clearly now. I see you surrounded with luxury—no duchess could have more—I see your father, not such a bear, and not such an invalid as I was led to expect; I see your titled friends and your titled admirers. I have now seen everything including the strong cords that bind you here, and that have drawn you away from me.”

He paused for a moment, making a quick gesture with his hand to show that Madeline must hear him out.

“And now I have come to say my last word; you will or I will tell your father the truth before to-morrow night. It will then depend upon circumstances whether you leave England or not. In my opinion your place is at home; but if your father wishes to have you with him and Harry, I shall say nothing against it.”

Madeline listened to his long and authoritative speech in some dismay: this plan would not suit her at all, and Hugh really was getting quite too—too overbearing. She would not give in; if she succumbed now it would be for always. What a fuss he was making simply because she was going abroad for three months.

“You can wait surely till we come back? You see papa is not in a state now for any sudden excitement. I will tell him, if you wish, within a month, when he is quite recovered—”

“I will wait no longer,” interrupted her husband sternly. “I have already waited your good pleasure for a whole year, put it off from time to time with one excuse after another, until such a period as you could manage to screw your courage to the sticking point. I now see that that period will be of the same epoch as the Greek Kalends! Frankly, Madeline, I’m not going to stand any more nonsense. I am your husband. I can support you; certainly only in a very modest fashion compared to this”—looking round—“you will have no carriage, no maid, no fine dresses—at least, yet—they may come by-and-by. Your father is perfectly well able to travel alone; were he very feeble I would say nothing. It is shameful—yes, that is the only word that will fit the subject—that I should have to remind you of your child. He should be your first care; he, if you like, is delicate, he wants looking after far more than your father now. You will stay at home, and look after him. It may not be your pleasure, but it is certainly your duty. You can go to Mrs. Holt’s at any time and remain there, and be welcome as long as you like, and I can run down now and then. Lodgings after this would be too terrible a change. I will admit.”

“The child is perfectly well, Hugh,” she returned, both frightened and angry. “I saw him three days ago, and he was then the picture of health. He is too young to trouble much yet; Mrs. Holt is an excellent nurse. Pray how many children are sent out to nurse, and their parents never see them for the first two years? It is always done in France. When Harry is older it will be different, of course; at present it is all the same to the child where he is, as long as he is well cared for. You have suddenly become most arbitrary and tyrannical!”—resolved that all the hard hitting should not be on his side—“you are not the least like what you used to be, and you are very cruel to say such things, and very rude. You are not going the right way to work to recall me home—to your home. I may be led, but I shall never be driven, and I shall take my own way about telling papa, and my own time; and, what is more, I shall most certainly accompany him to the Riviera to-morrow, and I hope when I come back”—speaking in a great passion,

and in little short gasps—“that I shall find you in a more agreeable frame of mind.”

There was an appreciable pause, and then Hugh said, in a tone of angry astonishment,—

“Are you in earnest, Madeline?”

“In earnest? Of course I am.”

She looked at her companion. He had grown visibly paler, and there was a strange light in his eyes that she did not remember to have ever seen before.

“Since you have now,” he said, in a low, repressed tone, “to make your choice, once for all, between your two characters, you must for the future be always known as Miss Grant or as Mrs. Glyn. We will not have this double dealing any longer. Now, which will you be, married or single?”—keeping his eyes fixed on hers with a look of quiet determination. “If you wish we can bury the past.”

No answer.

Madeline’s mind was a fearful battlefield of doubt, fear, hesitation and passion.

“Speak, Madeline!” he reiterated, imperatively. “Married or single?”

“If it were not for the child,” she burst out, passionately, “if my life is to be a burden to me like this, if you are always to be reproaching me and scolding me—”

“I see,” he said, quickly. “You would rather be Miss Grant. The child, I know, is but a pretence—a speech that means nothing. Please to give me an answer, once for all”—holding out his hand—“I must have it from your own lips.”

At this critical juncture the door was flung open, and Mr. Grant, rather frantically from having being left so long alone, hobbled in, saying,—

“Well! well! well! Madeline, what is the meaning of this? The room is half in darkness. What the deuce has kept you? Has that fellow?—oh! beg pardon, Mr. Glyn, did not know you were here still. Can’t have seen much of the pictures, eh! unless you and Madeline have eyes like cats! Come, come, out with it.”

“Married or single?” whispered Hugh, in a hurried undertone, holding her hand as it were in a vice.

This action was not seen by Mr. Grant, who was still at some distance, and at the far side of them, occupied with the poker.

“Married or single? Now is the time. I shall tell him,” he urged very eagerly.

“Single!” exclaimed Madeline, hastily thrusting his hand away, spurred by her immediate fears, regardless of all but the present moment.

“So be it,” was the low rejoinder.

And Mr. Grant, as he poked the fire and furiously rang the bell, had no more idea than the poker or the bell-rope of the important tie that had just been severed.

Mr. Glyn, who looked rather queer and grave, came over, and again took his leave; and, without any farewell to Madeline, who was still standing in the background, in the dusk, he opened the door and departed.

“What have you been doing in here all this time?” asked Mr. Grant, querulously. “What have you been about?—looked to me as if you and that fellow had been having a row? Never seen him before. Nice gentlemanly chap. None of your ‘Yaw! haw!’ sort of people, with no more brains than a pin, and as much conceit as a flock of peacocks. No, this fellow has some sense. I—By the way, Madeline, you look rather put out, too, eh? He has not been proposing for you, has he, eh? Come, now, make a clean breast of it,” facetiously.

“No, papa,” she answered, in rather a shaky voice; “he has not—that is just the last thing he would do. You won’t see him again—that’s one comfort,” she added, with a last flare-up of temper.

“Comfort—comfort? Not a bit of it. I’d like to see more of him; and, when we come back, remind me to ask him to dinner. Now don’t forget. What’s his name again—Glen—Green?”

“Glyn—Glyn—Glyn.”

"Yes, yes; to be sure—a barrister. Humph. Looks a sharp sort of chap, too. But what the deuce were you and he talking about in here? You've not told me yet."

"We were quarrelling, papa—that's all—our first and last quarrel," attempting to laugh it off with a laugh that was almost hysterical. "There's the gong."

"Ah! so it is, and I'm quite peckish. Look sharp and go and dress," setting an example himself on the moment by hurrying out of the room, with his stick, rapping away all down the passage, till the sound was lost in the distance.

Still Madeline did not obey him. She stood at the fire, her hands tightly clasped, her heart beating almost to suffocation with the after-effects of her exciting interview. She was tossed about between indignation with Hugh, relief from present penalties, regret, and many other contradictory ideas, all stirring about in her mind at the very same moment, like a swarm of bees that have suddenly been disturbed.

"What infatuation possessed her to marry Hugh?" she asked herself, now looking back on their marriage from the lofty eminence of a spoiled, adulated London beauty.

A certain bitter grudge against him and their days of poverty, and the horrible life into which he would draw her back, animated her feelings as she stood there alone at the fire. Such a tyrannical, determined sort of partner would never suit her now. He deserved to be taken at his word—her passion was still hot against him—yes, he richly deserved what he so little expected. He might go. As to the child, that was another matter, quite—and still here, of course.

They had had, she and Hugh, a previous rift on the tinsel lute, and now a few wild words in the heat of passion had separated them for life. As he had said "So be it." "So let it be," she echoed, aloud; and, pulling the chain, which we have seen before, from the inside of her dress, with hurried fingers she unfasted it, slipped off her wedding ring, and dropped it into the fire which her father had poked up to some purpose, little dreaming for what an occasion it would serve.

Then Madeline went, at last, and scrambled into her dinner toilet with feverish haste, and was, luckily for herself, down just in the nick of time.

After dinner she was quite feverishly gay. She meant to thoroughly enjoy herself now. And she went to the piano after dinner, and sang song after song with a feeling of recklessness, and an impulse that she must do something to put away her hateful present thoughts, and to keep up her somewhat limp self-possession and rapidly falling spirits.

But it was done, the die was cast. She had burned her boats.

(To be continued.)

**EDUCATION OF AUSTRIAN GIRLS.**—The education of girls in Vienna is somewhat peculiar, and perhaps worthy of note. Up to fifteen years of age they are kept at their studies, but are not deprived of society. They dress very simply, rarely wearing a silk gown till the day they leave the schoolroom for the ballroom. After they leave school they go through a year's or even two years' teaching in the pantry and in the kitchen, under some member of the family, or even, in some cases, in another family, under trained cooks. They may never be required to cook a dinner, but they are thus rendered independent of cooks and servants, as they learn how to do everything themselves, long before they begin housekeeping on their own account. When married, they are most affectionate wives and mothers. An Austrian lady, in fact, is as accomplished and learned as an English governess, as good a housekeeper and cook as a German, as witty and vivacious in society as a Parisian, as passionate as an Italian, and as handsome as an English woman—some of the most beautiful women in Europe being found in Vienna.

## THE PATH OF LOVE.

My feet have wandered into pleasant places,  
Where love looks out from every blade of  
grass;  
And God's sweet flowers lift up their happy  
faces,  
To give me smiles of welcome as I pass.

The grand old trees stretch forth their arms  
to bless me,  
And singing birds thrill to me from above;  
While summer's softest winds pause to caress  
me,  
And bring me tender messages of love.

Even the low weeds so scorned and alighted—  
Return the sympathy I give to them!  
I praise their homely worth—and uninvited  
They bow their heads to kiss my garment's hem.

Folded within the heart of each glad morning  
Are beauties old, and yet for ever new;  
I drink the glorious splendour of their dawning  
As thirsty blossoms drink the wayside dew.

I may not revel in the costly splendour  
That they possess who kneel at Mammon's  
shrine.

But the most perfect gifts God's love can  
tender,  
Home, health, and untold happiness are  
mine.

My woman's heart can ask no greater blessing,  
No sweeter lot than that vouchsafed to me:  
To fill life's hours in loving and caressing  
The little child that prattles at my knee.

And so I revel in the wealth of beauty  
That greets my eyes around, below, above;  
And think how pleasant is the path of duty,  
When all the way lies through the path of  
love.

L. A. P.

## THE FAIR ELAINE.

### CHAPTER XLVII.—(continued.)

LADY ELAINE paused to bestow another caress upon the lips to near her own and then resumed:

"Now I will tell you how I worked out this intricate puzzle. I told you in my letter how accident brought me into contact with good Jane Collins, and that I learned from her what transpired in connection with you at Madrid. She related how she had been startled upon seeing you, for you resembled so strangely the 'beautiful lady' who had been shipwrecked. I made her go over every item of that story for my benefit, and remembering the date of that terrible ordeal through which my own father and mother had passed, and knowing that you were a poor little waif cast up by the sea, and your birth still shrouded with mystery, I became suddenly impressed that you might be the little Alice for whom our mother grieved as long as she lived. I went immediately to Miss McAllister and asked her if she had retained any articles of clothing which you had worn at the time of your return. She had nothing save a pair of little shoes and stockings and a tiny ring set with an emerald. The shoes and socks did not, at first, appear to me to be of much value, but the moment that my eyes fell upon that ring my heart sprang into my throat.

"Mamma had a very dear friend who married a nobleman and went to live in France. When she was notified of the birth of little Alice she immediately sent congratulations, and with them a very plain but rich ring set with an emerald. 'If it had only been a son,' she wrote, 'the stone should have been a diamond, and remember whenever the heir does make his appearance he is to have it.' When the news of my birth reached her she sent

another ring, the exact counterpart of the first, saying that she should serve the daughters of the house of Mordaunt all alike, and again spoke of a diamond being reserved for the heir; and lo! when Arthur came, true to her promise, there came still another circlet, exactly like the others, only set with a pure, beautiful white stone.

"The moment that Miss McAllister gave me the ring that had been taken from your finger, I recognised it, and in my heart I knew well enough that you were my sister; but I knew that you and others would not be feeling satisfied without further proof, so I resolved to say nothing about my suspicions until I could establish the fact beyond a doubt. I have the three rings which mamma's friend sent her; I brought them to show to you—they are the first link in my chain of evidence."

Lady Elaine opened the box upon her lap, and taking from it another smaller one, lifted the lid and revealed the three rings lying within upon a bed of snow-white cotton—tiny little things, fit only for baby fingers, but fraught with an interest and sacredness which would render them priceless to those two lovely women so long as they should live.

"See, my darling," she said, putting the box into Arley's hand, "if you can't pick out your own."

Arley bent over them with quivering lips and tear-laden eyes, wondering how it was possible that so much vital importance could be connected with such tiny trifles.

"They are exactly alike," she said at length. "I can see no difference in them, excepting, perhaps, that the stone in this one is a trifle larger than in the other; but whether it belongs to you or me I cannot tell."

"We will assume that it is yours since you are the eldest daughter of the house of Mordaunt," Lady Elaine answered, smiling, "and," she added, taking it from her, "we will make a charm of each, and always wear them as the precious mementoes of our restoration to each other."

She fastened it, as she ceased speaking, upon Arley's watch chain, and then attached the other to her own.

"The diamond," she continued, tenderly, "we will lay away among our treasures as a sacred keepsake, to remind us of our only brother."

She then took from the box upon her lap the little socks which Miss McAllister had given her, and also the pair which she had received from Captain Bancroft's widow, and told Arley of her visit to the old lady, and of the long and conclusive story which she had related to her.

"I knew," she said, "before she had half finished, that all mystery and doubt were solved, but when she brought me the passenger list, and I read there the names of our own father and mother,—Lord Arthur Warburton, Duke of Mordaunt, Lady Warburton, Miss Alice Warburton and nurse,—the fact was established, and I knew that the girl whom I had learned to love so dearly at Hazelmere was my own sister."

"It is wonderful! I do not know how to comprehend it," Arley murmured, when Lady Elaine concluded.

"It is wonderful," she assented, "and I am so thankful, so content, so blessed in the knowledge. Just think, you are no longer Arley the nameless, as you have so often and bitterly styled yourself, but Lady Alice Warburton, eldest daughter of the Duke of Mordaunt, and heiress to half of his immense property."

Arley flushed a sudden crimson.

"The property—that has always been yours—I cannot take it," she said, quickly.

Lady Elaine laughed such a low, sweet laugh at this.

"Have you forgotten," she asked, "how two years ago, when poor Mrs. Westworth tremblingly made her appearance, claiming naught but a name and kindred, the 'usurper' Arley not only relinquished her name, but all right and title to fortune, home, and everything?"



"I know," Arley returned, with the flush still on her cheek; "but I had been using the poor girl's fortune as freely as if it had been water, while she had barely existed, with no home, no love, or anything else to make life endurable."

"Out of your own mouth will I condemn you," Lady Elaine retorted, smiling. "All these long years I have been spending your fortune as freely as if it was water, while during the last two years you have lived—how have you lived, Arley?"

"You shall tell me about it by-and-by," she resumed, hastily, seeing how flushed and pained Arley's face had grown at the question; "but you must not allow any false scruples to trouble you; remember that you are the eldest daughter of the Duke of Mordaunt, and your rights are paramount to mine—you are to share equally with me from this time forth—that I am resolved upon, and from this day you are to consider that you have ten thousand pounds annually at your disposal."

Arley knew from her manner that it would be useless to argue the matter further, and so she did not refer to it again.

"It all seems like a dream," she said, musingly.

"But it is not a dream—it is a blessed, glorious reality; and how much we may both yet enjoy in spite of the sad past," her sister returned. "Our father's house here in the city stands closed and gloomy; we will go back to it—it shall be our home, if you consent—I could not live in it alone, but with you to help me enjoy it it would be a pleasure to go back into its familiar halls and rooms. Then Mordaunt Hall, at Everham, shall be opened once more in summer time, and we will do what we can for the glory of the old house, and we will be happy in each other, and in doing all the good we can."

In spite of her hopeful words, and her attempt at cheerfulness, Lady Elaine broke down here and threw herself sobbing into Arley's arms.

All the tender memories of those happy months at Hazelmere came rushing over her with all that she had lost and suffered since; and, in spite of the happiness which she experienced in her new relations with Arley, a feeling of desolation and misery completely overpowered her for the moment.

Arley soothed her with exceeding tenderness, and when, after a time, she grew more calm, they began to talk over the past more minutely, and to lay plans for the future.

Arley questioned Lady Elaine very closely regarding what she knew of Philip since his return from Spain, and was at length convinced that he had told her all the truth—that he had indeed not "spared himself."

Then she showed her the letter which he had written to her, and related all that she had learned from Eddie Winthrop regarding his more recent doings.

Lady Elaine was greatly astonished.

"There is good in him after all," she said. "He is acting most nobly."

"Do you think so?" Arley cried, with an eagerness which made her speech sound almost sharp.

"I certainly do," Lady Elaine answered, giving her a keen glance and marking her fluttering eyelids and excited breathing. "If he has done all that you have told me I believe that he is really repentant and desirous of making the most of his future. It is very evident that he has no hope as far as you are concerned, and he could have had no selfish object in writing this letter, for no one, excepting myself, had had the least suspicion of the good fortune awaiting you. Besides, if he had expected forgiveness, he would not have been apt to make himself out quite so bad as he has done—at least, he need not have told you of that shameless robbery and his subsequent gambling operations."

"But where do you suppose he got all the money which he has deposited in the Bank of England, the interest of which Mr. Holly has

been notified to pay to me quarterly?" Arley asked.

"That seems to be a mystery," responded Lady Elaine, gravely.

"Of course he never could have earned it in so short a time, although Sir Anthony told me that he was overrun with business," pursued Arley.

"No, I do not think he could have earned it; but—it is possible that that speculation, which he thought had proved so disastrous about the time of your engagement, may have turned out well, after all. Do you know what he had invested in?"

"No; but he told me that it had ruined him," Arley answered.

"If he had put his money into stocks they may have risen, even at this late day, and realized a handsome sum for him. I have heard of such things," Lady Elaine explained.

"That is so; I had not thought of that. I feared that he had been gambling again; I could account for this sudden acquisition in no other way; and though I could not have accepted the money under any circumstances, my whole soul revolted against using gold obtained in such a way."

"I believe he really loves you, Arley," Lady Elaine said, after a short silence, during which she had been examining Philip's letter again.

"What makes you say that?" Arley asked, sharply, a quick flush again mounting to her forehead.

"These words which he has crossed out, and which evidently must have seemed such a useless, hopeless appeal, or he never would have so crossed them; and also this little touching prayer at the end."

"Yes, that was the only thing in all the letter that did not fill me with horror, and—I have suffered so much—so much through him—oh! how have I ever borne it?" Arley cried, in a voice thick with pain.

"It has been too, too cruel, I know, darling," her sister returned, tenderly, "and I believe he also realizes it now; for, besides the regret and remorse expressed here, it seems as if he is striving to make up in a measure at least to poor little cripple Eddie Winthrop for some of his brutality towards you. That is noble in him, Arley; I think it is grand for any one to take a little orphan, smooth over the rough places in life for him, and rear and educate him. I must confess," she went on, gravely, "that I experienced the utmost scorn and contempt for Philip Paxton when he came to me that night with words of love and asked me to marry him—a divorced man, he said he was; but I begin to feel something like a spark of respect for him once more for the course he is pursuing."

"What do you suppose made him face about so suddenly?" Arley asked; "do you imagine that it was the influence of what either you or I, or both combined, said to him, which made him see himself as he really was?"

"I do not know," Lady Elaine replied, musingly; "perhaps his wickedness was like a disease—like a violent fever, maybe—which, when it has once fastened itself upon its victim must have its run, and pervades and poisons the whole system until the crisis comes, when the fever either does its fatal work and death ensues, or, subsiding, life conquers and health returns. In Philip's case, when the crisis was reached his better nature conquered, and he began at once to strive to redeem the past."

"Do you believe that any one can 'redeem' the past?" Arley asked, wearily.

"Perhaps not, in one sense, and yet I know that there are many men who have lived the latter years of their lives so nobly that they have blotted out, at least from the minds of others, all remembrance of the sins of their youth, and, in fact, atoned for much of the evil which they have previously done. I must say," the lovely girl continued, gently, "that my heart yearns a little after that recreant husband of yours, Arley; do you suppose that he could ever atone to you?"

"I know how hard the thought of publicity must be to you," she said, gently; "and if you prefer we will keep everything quiet, at least for the present. It will not be necessary to tell any one save Miss McAllister, and Ima, and Sir Anthony's family—of course we must not keep this from them, for they are all so deeply interested in us, and they can be trusted to keep our secrets. But, Arley, dear," and Lady Elaine's face grew wistful, "I cannot consent to be separated from you again. Now that we have found each other, we must live and love each other like sisters."

"No, I cannot leave you; I shall always stay with you. I have yearned all my life for some one who was my very own to love, and now I

Arley gave her a startled glance, and grew deathly pale at the question.

She did not answer for some time; then, looking up with a sort of hopeless misery in her eyes, she said, in a hollow tone:

"I have said that I can never forgive him, and I do not believe that I ever can; I am afraid I do not even want to."

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

"I AM HIS WIFE."

"Well, dear," Lady Elaine said, a moment or two after Arley's last remark, "we will leave Philip entirely out of the question, and turn to some other subject."

She had thought that if Philip was truly repentant, and had determined to live a noble life henceforth, and if Arley still retained anything of love for him, she would be glad to see them united and happy once more. That was why she had asked her if he could ever atone to her for the wrong he had done her; but she saw at once the futility of attempting any such reunion.

"Now that all the dark past has been unravelled," she continued, "and we know just where you belong, I suppose your identity ought to be announced, so that everybody may know that you are Lady Alice Warburton, and the eldest daughter of the Duke of Mordaunt."

In reply to this Arley threw herself upon her sister's breast, and burst into a perfect storm of tears.

"What is it, darling? How have I wounded you?" Lady Elaine asked, startled and dismayed by her violent grief.

"You have not wounded me—you are all that is kind and tender; but, aside from my love for you and a feeling of gratitude for the knowledge that I belong to you and am no longer nameless, I am wretched, and the thought of making this discovery public, and with it, of course, the shameful facts regarding my domestic misery, drives me nearly wild," Arley replied, in bitterness of spirit.

Lady Elaine looked troubled.

She was so overjoyed to know that Arley was really her sister that she was eager to proclaim it to the whole world—eager to have her recognized by all their friends, and awarded the respect and consideration due to the eldest daughter of the house of Mordaunt. But of course her happiness was the first thing to be considered, and she now realized that if her return was announced, and she was introduced as the Lady Alice, the inquiries would naturally arise: "Where is Mr. Paxton?" "Why are the husband and wife living separate?" "Why does he not share the honours which has fallen to the lot of his bride?" Then there would have to follow explanations and revelations, and there would be endless gossip and scandal.

It would be dreadful to have all the disgraceful experience of their life abroad noted about, and she did not wonder that Arley shrank from the ordeal, and was wretched.

"Ah, it would be better, a thousand times," she thought, with a weary sigh, "if he had died, like poor Wil, and left her a grief-stricken widow, than to have come home with this living trouble."

She bent, and pressed her tremulous lips to Arley's forehead.

"I know how hard the thought of publicity must be to you," she said, gently; "and if you prefer we will keep everything quiet, at least for the present. It will not be necessary to tell any one save Miss McAllister, and Ima, and Sir Anthony's family—of course we must not keep this from them, for they are all so deeply interested in us, and they can be trusted to keep our secrets. But, Arley, dear," and Lady Elaine's face grew wistful, "I cannot consent to be separated from you again. Now that we have found each other, we must live and love each other like sisters."

"No, I cannot leave you; I shall always stay with you. I have yearned all my life for some one who was my very own to love, and now I

cannot give you up!" Arley cried, clinging to her.

"But how shall we manage it, and not arouse the suspicions of people?" her sister asked.

Arley thought awhile, then answered, —

"Let us go to Mordaunt House to live, as you proposed. You can give as a reason for the change that you feel as if the home of your father ought not to remain closed any longer, and I will go with you in the capacity of a companion."

"I do not like that arrangement at all," interrupted Lady Elaine, colouring. "To think of my occupying a high social position, and you, my own sister, living in such obscurity."

"It will be better so," Arley returned. "Auntie does not need me—she has Ina, and I need quiet and rest. I can have it there at Mordaunt House, and go on with my painting, which I enjoy more than any other occupation. You do not go into society at all, and we can be very happy in each other, and live in an unpretentious way, and when we cannot keep our secret any longer I suppose I shall have to bear the result as best I can."

"But what will Lady Hamilton do without me?" murmured Lady Elaine, musingly.

"She need not do without you; we can invite her and Sir Anthony to make their home with us while they are in town; it will be much pleasanter for them than living at an hotel; and when they must go back to Hazelmere, if they feel they cannot be separated from you, they can return our favour by inviting us there. I feel that I cannot become conspicuous at present. I have remained in comparative oblivion so long that it will be far better for me to continue in that state," Arley concluded, bitterly.

Lady Elaine sighed, and thought that it might not be so easy keeping her return and separation from Philip a secret as she imagined. However, she resolved to do nothing to oppose her in her present unhappy state, but do everything she could to win her thoughts from herself and make her life as smooth as possible; smoothing other people's lives seemed to be the Lily of Mordaunt's peculiar mission.

She saw that it would be the wisest thing they could do (to go to Mordaunt House to live, for in the privacy of their own home they could be much more independent than anywhere else, and secure from the prying eyes of the curious; while she did not doubt that Lady Hamilton would be very glad to give them the protection of her presence as long as she remained in town).

After consulting awhile longer upon these plans the two sisters went down to tell their glad news to Miss McAllister and Ina.

To say that they were surprised would be but a tame statement of the fact.

They had imagined every possible solution to the mystery as they now thought, but it fell far short of the right one; and now Miss McAllister seemed almost to feel as if Arley had been raised almost entirely out of her atmosphere.

"To think of your being a Countess in your own right!" she said, wonderingly, and gazing at her as if to see if the title of "Lady" had not caused a change in her appearance.

"Well, auntie, I feel like a very humble personage in spite of it all," was the rather sad reply; "and though I am unspeakably thankful to know just where and to whom I belong in the world, yet the knowledge can never change the love I bear to those who have been my kindest and best friends."

She bent and kissed the old lady on the forehead most tenderly as she ceased speaking.

"I suppose you will want to take her away from me, now?" Miss McAllister said with wistful sadness to Lady Elaine.

"Yes, auntie," Arley hastened to say, "we two sisters, the last of our race, cannot be separated, but we shall be so near you, for we are going to live at Mordaunt House, that we can come to see you every day."

"Well, I suppose it is right and best so; but

you have belonged to me for so long that it is rather hard to relinquish my claim," the old lady answered, with a sigh.

Sweet Ina Wentworth heard the announcement with tears in her lovely eyes.

"I had hoped that Arley was henceforth to be my sister," she said to Lady Elaine, "but, of course, the ties of blood are strongest, and, perhaps my loss in this way may prove my gain in another—in securing your friendship thereby."

"Indeed, I shall be very proud to be considered your friend," Lady Elaine answered, heartily.

And thus it was settled that Mordaunt House should be reopened and occupied once more.

Lady Elaine persuaded Arley to drive back to the Langham with her and be presented in her new character to the friends waiting so impatiently there to learn the secret of her birth; and there, during a tempting dinner served in their own apartments, they talked over their plans with Sir Anthony and Lady Hamilton, who sympathised most heartily with them in their new happiness.

"Assist you in reopening Mordaunt House? Of course I will, with the greatest of pleasure," Lady Hamilton said, in reply to Lady Elaine's request to do so, "and thank you most cordially for the invitation. You know, dear, you are just the same to me as an own daughter, and if Wil had lived you would probably have made this old home your town residence, and of course, in that case, I should have spent my time there when we came up to London; and why not now, if you both desire it? It will be much pleasanter than the bustle and confusion of a grand hotel like this. Then, when you want a change you can come to us at Hazelmere. I think you have arranged it very nicely for us all."

Lady Hamilton was evidently much pleased at being so confidentially consulted.

But when told that Arley wished to keep her identity a secret, and the reason for it, she demurred.

"She ought to assume her title, and take her proper position in society," she said, gravely.

"But, dear Lady Hamilton, it would not matter for awhile, would it? The future will shape itself after we are settled, and you must know that neither of us have much heart for society at present," Lady Elaine returned, sadly, and her friend did not press the matter any further.

So Mordaunt House was opened, and the two sisters seemed suddenly to have acquired a new interest in life, in refurnishing and making a pleasant, habitable home of it.

There was plenty to be done, for, having been shut up for so many years, everything had become defaced, moth-eaten, and dilapidated, and it took fully two months to put it in order.

Meantime, Arley kept herself very close; she saw no one, went out very little, and hardly anyone, outside of her immediate circle of friends, knew of her return. She left all shopping and ordering for Lady Elaine and Lady Hamilton to do, but devoted all her energies to the disposing and arranging of their purchases when they arrived at their house.

She had heard nothing, seen nothing of Philip; he might have been dead and forgotten by everybody for all the knowledge she had of him; but, strange to say, he was in her thoughts almost constantly, and she often found herself wondering if he was still plodding along at his business during the day, and devoting his evenings to little Eddie Winthorpe.

She had not gone again to the Academy. She dare not trust herself with the boy again lest she betray herself; and, besides, she was fearful of meeting people whom she knew, and thus subjecting herself to painful inquiries.

But she did not forget her promise to the interesting little cripple, and one day she enclosed her copy of Raphael's "Madonna" in

an envelope, directing it to him in the care of Philip Paxton, Esq., and as she wrote that name, for almost the first time since their separation, a strange trembling seized her, and all her strength seemed to go from her.

Sir Charles Herbert and his mother had been informed of the happy change in her circumstances, and were greatly pleased, while they willingly consented to regard the communication as strictly confidential.

The day arrived when everything was completed, and Mordaunt House was formally taken possession of, and Arley—she still insisted upon being called by her old name, saying that she could never recognize herself if addressed as Lady Alice—and Lady Elaine gave a dinner, in honour of the occasion, to their intimate friends—Sir Anthony and Lady Hamilton, Sir Charles Herbert and his mother, Miss McAllister and Ina, and Fred Vane and his wife.

There were only ten in all, but they were all dear friends, and everyone was deeply interested in the re-establishment of this beautiful home, and the lovely girls who were to occupy it.

Sir Charles Herbert had availed himself several times of the permission which he had obtained at the first visit which he had made at Miss McAllister's to call as often as he liked, and each call had served to impress the charms of fair Ina Wentworth more deeply upon his heart; and to-day, while at Mordaunt House, there was that in his manner and bearing towards her which told more than one observant one that Miss McAllister would not be able to keep the gentle girl all to herself much longer.

The dinner passed off very pleasantly and socially, notwithstanding that the thoughts of most of the company would revert from time to time to one whom they had so dearly loved, and now missed so sadly.

Sir Charles and his mother both exerted themselves to make the evening agreeable by relating many charming and amusing incidents connected with their recent travels.

Lady Elaine bravely tried to conceal the grief which this reunion could not fail to excite, and her consciousness of that one vacant chair, and was really very cheerful and entertaining, while Arley, too, strove to perform the part of a hospitable hostess, though her heart was very sore.

Sir Charles contrived to secure a few moments alone with Ina before the company separated, and something in his look and in the tone in which he addressed her made the tall-tale blushes leap into her cheeks, and her lovely blue-grey eyes droop shyly before his.

"Will you ride with me in Rotten-row tomorrow, Miss Ina?" he asked, in a low voice. "I have recently purchased a fine horse, which, I think, is superior under the saddle, and I would ask you to do me the favour to try her?"

There is an object beneath this request, Ina feels—an object which thrills her heart with deep joy and makes her pulses leap with a strange excitement.

But she assents with a shy, tremulous smile, and Sir Charles takes his leave, feeling much elated and quite sure that the question which he intends to ask on the morrow will receive a favourable reply.

When their guests were all gone Arley somehow felt depressed.

It was very late, but she did not feel at all like sleeping; and, taking the evening paper, she retired to her own room to read until she could coax the "drowsy god" to bring her repose.

Her apartments and Lady Elaine's were directly opposite, having only the width of the hall between them, and these comprised sitting and sleeping rooms, with a small dressing-room between, and they had been fitted up with great taste and elegance.

They were exactly alike in all their appointments, the only difference being in the colours, Lady Elaine's being furnished in blue and white, Arley's in pink and white.

Arley looked around her as she entered her elegant boudoir, a light of appreciation in her



dark eyes, for she had always loved beautiful and luxurious things, and everything was as delightful as the most perfect taste and the lavish expenditure of money could make it.

Then a deep sigh heaved her chest, and she threw herself wearily into a great, inviting chair which stood beside the glowing grate.

"What does it all amount to," she cried, bitterly, "all this beauty and elegance and comfort, if I am not happy? I am wretched," she moaned, stretching out her arms and bringing her hands together with a quick, despairing gesture. "I miss something out of my life—there is a void which nothing seems to fill, and I am utterly miserable."

Her voice broke, and she fell to sobbing like a grieved, heart-broken child.

But it was not for long; it was not often that she indulged in such weakness; and she soon sat up, resolutely wiped her tears, and, unfolding her paper, began to read the current news of the day.

Suddenly her eyes lighted in a startled way upon this item,—

**"SAD AND PROBABLY FATAL ACCIDENT."**—As Philip Paxton, Esq., a rising young barrister, was driving this afternoon, in company with a young lad whom he has recently adopted, the horse suddenly took fright at some object in the street, became unmanageable, and both occupants of the carriage were thrown; the boy escaping unhurt, while Mr. Paxton, being hurled violently against the curbing, was taken up senseless. As the affair occurred near Hyde Park-corner, the injured man was taken to St. George's Hospital, where an examination showed him to have been very seriously hurt, and this casualty, combined with a former injury received in a railway accident, renders Mr. Paxton's condition an extremely critical one.

Every particle of colour receded from Arley's face as she read the above; her eyes grew almost wild with terror, her breath seemed to stop, and she felt as if she were suffocating.

"Oh, Arley, Arley!" She seemed almost to hear him calling out those words which only a short time before he had so impulsively written and then crossed out. "Let a little of divine compassion into your heart, and offer one single prayer—I should feel its influence, though the world divided us."

How those words had burned themselves into her brain!

(To be continued.)

**AMBER AND ITS USES.**—The value of amber, familiarised as the substance is in "smokers' requisites," is far greater than the majority imagine. Small pieces, of indifferent quality, suffice for the mouthpieces of pipes and for isolated ornaments, and though the prices charged for even such specimens as these are far above their actual worth, they are comparatively cheap. In necklaces, however, where every bead has exactly to match its fellow, or in the larger articles, requiring to be cut from a single piece of considerable size, the cost and real worth of the fossil gum rises so rapidly that in certain cases it deserves, if the money charged for it be any criterion, to rank with the precious minerals, and many pieces of amber in the rough state are worth more than their bulk in gold. Yet even this does not approach by a long way the esteem in which antiquity held their electrum; for not only was amber the oldest of gems, and therefore, in a measure, magnified by traditional reputation, but it was supposed to possess amazing occult properties. It was worn all over Northern Italy as a preventive of goitre, just as it is worn to-day by the people of Arabia as a talisman against the evil eye. More powerful than sorcery and witchcraft, it was an amulet that made poisons harmless; ground up with honey and oil of roses, it was a specific for deafness,

and with Attic honey for dimness of sight. Nor is this claim for medicinal virtue altogether without foundation in fact, for its efficacy as a defence of the throat against chills—owing, probably, to the extreme warmth when in contact with the skin and the circle of electricity so maintained—has been tested and substantiated. The ancients, however, were not content with mystic curative powers in the solid substance, for they ascribed valuable properties to it in combination, admiring the perfume that resulted not only for its resinous fragrance, but for its healthiness, thereby detecting in the fossil pine-gum the same virtues that modern physis attributes to the living pine trees. In many parts of the East, especially in China, where prodigious quantities of Prussian amber are consumed, this substance is preferred to all others for incense; and thus the Buddhist shrines in the palaces of Peking and the holy places of Mohammedan Mecca alike owe the fragrance of pious fumes to the same strange, beautiful source, the dead fir forests of a pre-historic Europe. Nevertheless, the chief charm, both for the past and present, lies in the positive beauty of the mineral.

WHAT I'M THINKING OF IS—what it must be for a wife when she is never sure of her husband, when he hasn't got a principle in him to make him more afraid of doing the wrong thing by others than of getting his own toes pinched. That's the long and the short of it. Young folks may get fond of each other before they may know what life is, and they may think it all holiday if they can only get together; but it soon turns into working day, my dear.

**HOW TO SOFTEN THE HANDS.**—"How am I to whiten and soften my hands?" is a question that is asked by a correspondent. Doubtless one way to do this is to avoid doing the work which has made your hands rough and dark, but often this work may be done with such care that the hands will not be injured. If one is obliged to sweep her house, to empty the ashes from grate or stove, and to wash dishes, she cannot expect to keep her hands as white as idle hands are; but, if she takes the precaution to put on a pair of gloves or mittens when she sweeps and is doing dusty work, one cause of rough skin will be removed. Then there are preparations which one may use. Powdered borax is excellent to soften the skin. A mixture which is said to be a sure cure for undue perspiration of the hands is made of a quarter of an ounce of powdered alum, the white of one egg, and enough bran to make a thick paste. After washing your hands apply this; let it remain on your hands for two or three minutes, and then wipe off with a soft dry towel. Lukewarm water is better than hot or cold if the skin is inclined to be tender or chafed.

**KEEP YOUR OWN COUNSEL.**—You are perhaps young and inexperienced, and in your desire to make a servant girl feel at home, take her too closely into your confidence, especially if she is a pleasant girl and useful in the house. But it is a very dangerous practice, and almost always makes a disturbance. All may go well enough while she is with you, but in the chances and changes of life she may and probably will drift into some other kitchen, where all the news she has gathered in yours may be rehearsed without stint. She will not discriminate with regard to those things you have strictly enjoined her "not to tell." In fact, these will likely be the first points "fished out" of her by some meddling woman. There is a surprising enjoyment in being the first to "tell news," and an inexperienced, undisciplined girl will rarely be found who can resist the temptation. You can treat a girl with perfect kindness, and yet not give yourself into her power. Keep your own counsel about your own affairs. Do not let her sympathy or great interest beguile you into relating what you are not quite willing to have told over in other places.

## CLIFFE COURT.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

MR. THOMAS DAINTREE, late head of the firm of Daintree, Richardson, and Daintree, lived in a very nice house in Russell-square—a house that was heavy, and square, and substantial looking, like Mr. Daintree himself; and on the particular afternoon of which I write the lawyer was seated in a capacious dining room, eating filberts and drinking '58 port by way of dessert—for he invariably dined in the middle of the day.

He did not look particularly delighted when a housemaid entered, and interrupted this pleasing occupation.

"A gentleman wishes to see you, if you please, sir."

"But I don't please! You know I never please to see people directly after my dinner."

"I told the gentleman so, but he said I was to give you this," tendering a card, "and perhaps you would make an exception in his favour."

"Some begging impostor, I daresay," muttered the lawyer, putting on his spectacles. Directly he glanced at the card his manner changed. "Show the gentleman in at once, Weston. Mr. Hubert Cliffe! I wonder what he wants with me?"

Hubert was ushered in, shaken hands with by Mr. Daintree, and entreated to taste the '58 port, which, however, he declined. He looked anxious and worried—as he felt, and without any further preliminary, stated the business on which he had come.

"Of course you are aware of what has transpired at Cliffe since my uncle's death?" he said.

"You mean Lady De Roubaix taking possession of the estates?" responded the lawyer, putting the matter in as delicate phraseology as possible. "Yes, I am aware of it, and for your sake I was very sorry to hear of it."

"But not surprised?"

Mr. Daintree carefully cracked a nut before replying.

"Well, we lawyers have so many strange circumstances brought under our notice, that we get out of the way of being much surprised at anything."

"Which is equivalent to saying that you were prepared for what has actually taken place," said Hubert. "I came to you, Mr. Daintree, in the hope of getting information that might aid me in searching for proof of my parents' marriage, and also because I thought your advice, as the confidential solicitor to the Cliffe family, would be valuable."

"You are very kind to say so. As you are aware, I have retired from actual practice, but any assistance in my power I shall render you with very great pleasure. First of all, let me persuade you to have a glass of this port. I assure you it is equal to the best advice in the world."

Hubert shook his head, smiling faintly. "No, thank you; at any rate, not at present. I believe you were in my grandfather's confidence to a great extent," he added, drawing his chair up nearer, "and if so you can tell me of the relations subsisting between him and my father, and this may be of some service to me in pursuing my inquiries. You see, I am not inclined to give up the heritage I was taught to look upon as my own without a struggle."

"Quite right, too, and I hope with all my heart you may succeed," exclaimed the old man, sincerely. "All I know I will tell you. Your father was, in his early youth, rather wild and extravagant, and Lord Cliffe several times paid his debts. He was fond of betting, and gambled a good deal, but we were all inclined to look upon his failings with a lenient eye, for he was generous and kind-hearted to a degree; and his father often said to me that when he had sowed his wild oats he would settle down into as steady and respectable a

man as Everard himself—the last Lord Cliffe. Alec was away from home some time, and when he went back he and his father had a terrible quarrel, the particulars of which no one, save myself, ever knew. It seems that Alec was greatly in debt, and begged for money, which his father promised to give him on condition that he married a certain lady in the county, who was very wealthy, and who was supposed to be in love with him. This Alec absolutely refused to do, and when pressed for a reason, said that he was already engaged to a young girl whom he happened to meet when he was attending some races at W—. Lord Cliffe inquired who she was, and it then transpired that she served in a music shop in the town, and, though of respectable enough parents, yet could only claim to belong to middle-class tradespeople."

Mr Daintree paused, and Hubert thought there were some few points of resemblance between his father's case and his own. Having taken a long sip at his wine, the lawyer continued:—

"The Viscount—I am speaking of the last but one—was an extremely proud man, aristocratic to his finger-ends, and the idea of an alliance between his son and a woman of plebeian extraction was terrible to him. He entreated, threatened, commanded: all to no avail, for Alec absolutely refused to give up his fiancée; so, as a last resource, Lord Cliffe went to the girl herself; explained to her how matters stood with his son, and said that if she would break off her engagement he would pay Alec's debts, but if not, he would let his creditors do what they chose with him—which meant imprisonment. It seems that the young woman was deeply and disinterestedly in love with Alec; and at last, for his sake, she consented to send back his ring, and promised not to see him again; so she wrote and told him her decision, and then went to some relatives, and concealed from him her address. The end of the matter was Alec went out to Australia with the idea of setting up sheep-farming and retrieving his fallen fortunes, and nothing was heard of him for some years—nothing, in fact, till after his father had died and his brother Everard had gone out to see him, arriving just before his death."

"Do you know the name of the young woman in question?" asked Hubert, eagerly.

The lawyer shook his head.

"I do not. That particular was not mentioned when Lord Cliffe told me the story."

"Is there any way of discovering it?"

"I fear not after this lapse of time, especially considering that the facts were kept as secret as possible."

There was a pause, broken by Hubert.

"And after my Uncle Everard returned from Australia what happened?"

"Well, he came straight from Liverpool to London, and called on me in my office in Lincoln's Inn, bringing you with him, and I recollect when I saw you I said, 'This is a Cliffe, my lord; I can tell by his likeness to the family!' 'You are right, Daintree,' he answered, 'this is Hubert Cliffe, my brother Alec's son, and my future heir.' Naturally, I asked him for further particulars, but his replies were curt in the extreme, and Viscount Cliffe was a man you could not cross-examine. When I suggested something about certificates of marriage and birth he cut me short, saying that was his affair, and telling me to answer no questions that might be asked me concerning the matter, so of course I had no alternative but silence. One thing, he said, that impressed me—it was, 'Remember, if people ask you who this boy is you will answer, 'He is the Honourable Alec Cliffe's lawful son, and the future Lord Cliffe.'"

"Did he say that—really say it?" exclaimed Hubert, eagerly.

"He said it," returned the lawyer, with a certain significant emphasis not lost on his hearer.

"But you did not believe it?" the young man added, disappointedly.

"I will hardly go so far as that. To tell

you the truth, Mr. Hubert, I did not know what to believe then, any more than I do now. It seemed to me most improbable that Lord Cliffe should adopt you as his heir if he were not assured, in his own mind, that you could lawfully claim the name of Cliffe, and yet, on the other hand, he assuredly possessed no documents to substantiate that claim. I was puzzled then; I have been puzzled ever since, and I often wondered if the mystery would ever be fathomed. Lord Cliffe was a man who laid down a law for himself, and expected other people to abide by it; moreover, he would allow no one to question whether it was right or wrong."

"Then, as a matter of fact, you cannot tell me what your own ideas are in the matter?"

"Honestly, and candidly, I cannot. Sometimes I believe one thing, sometimes another; but I have no fixed conviction, except that, anyhow, you have been shamefully treated. It's bad enough for a man who has been brought up to work, to find himself thrown on the world to get his own living, but it's a hundredfold harder for one who, like yourself, has been accustomed to believe himself heir to vast estates. Whatever the truth may be concerning your birth, you have my very sincere sympathy at the present moment."

Hubert thanked him, and shortly afterwards took leave, and went out into the square, pondering over what he had heard.

On the whole, he did not consider he had had a lost journey, for he had succeeded in tracing out the cause of his father's expatriation, and that was something. So far as he could judge, Alec Cliffe's love for the girl who was so much beneath him in position had been a deep and honourable one. Could it be possible that girl had eventually gone out to Australia after him, in spite of her promise to his father?

If Hubert had but known her name it would have been a help, for he might have traced her out, and discovered what had been her career subsequent to the breaking off of her engagement; but in this particular the lawyer had not been able to assist him; and even if he went down to W—it was most unlikely that he would succeed in finding out who she was—so unlikely, that to attempt it looked like a wild-goose chase.

Lost in thought he wandered on, and found himself in Tottenham Court-road, along which he walked, having nothing particular to do, until he got to Camden-town. He had rather counted on his interview with Mr. Daintree helping him to a decision as to his next step, but this it had hardly done, for it left the mystery of his uncle's conduct in exactly the same condition as before, and the only way to clear it up seemed to be the one he had already suggested to Arthur—namely, his going out to Australia, and searching for records of his father in the place where he had died—and of this place he had the name, for it was given him by Lord Cliffe himself, some years ago, when they had been talking of having a tablet erected to Alec's memory in Cliffe Church.

"Yes," the young man exclaimed aloud in his excitement, "I will go out there, and search, and if I am unsuccessful I will give up the quest altogether, and set about earning a living. Surely I can win enough to keep Arthur and myself!"

He was just about crossing the street when he saw before him a lady, dressed in black, who was standing in the middle of the road, looking helplessly round as if in search of someone. At the same moment a handsome cab dashed up, and must inevitably have knocked her down had not our hero, seeing her danger, rushed forward, just in time to push her back, but not in time to save himself. The driver of the cab pulled up sharply, but it was too late, for the shaft had struck Hubert in the chest, and as he fell forward, the horse, in rearing, hit him on the temple.

Instantly a crowd collected, as crowds will, and a middle-aged woman, who had been on the pavement, caught the lady Hubert had

reposed by the arm, and then pressed forward with the others.

"What is it, Justina—oh! what is it?" exclaimed the young lady, in very sweet and silvery tones, that were slightly tinged with a foreign accent.

"Who was it took hold of me and pushed aside so roughly?"

"The gentleman who saved your life, Signorina," was the reply; "don't you know you had got just in front of a vehicle, and must have been killed, if he had not so bravely come to your assistance? And now he is lying there, just as you would have been, if he hadn't risked his life for yours."

The girl—she was hardly more—clasped her hands together in an access of grief.

"Go to him, Justina—do what you can—see that medical aid is sent for!" she cried, wildly. "Oh! my poor blind eyes—what terrible consequences have you led me into!"

For those dark eyes, so full and lustrous that they were the first thing in her face to attract attention, had been for years closed to the light of Heaven. She was blind.

"You should not have gone from my side; you know what always happens," commenced the older woman, but her mistress imperiously interrupted her.

"Do not scold me now—you can do that afterwards. See to the poor man."

Amongst the crowd was a dark, clean-shaven young man, with reliable-looking grey eyes, who had come forward, surrounding himself as a surgeon, and he was kneeling down, examining the unconscious Hubert, when Justina led her companion to the spot.

"Is he hurt very much?" she inquired.

"I am afraid so—seriously."

"Oh, I hope not—I hope not—I shall look upon myself as his murderer!" exclaimed the innocent cause of the accident; and her voice made the surgeon look at her with sudden interest, that was certainly not lessened as he saw her face—a beautiful, southern-looking face, with a curiously pathetic expression, whose meaning he did not then understand.

"Does anyone here know who this gentleman is?" inquired a policeman, who had arrived on the scene; and as no one was in a position to answer the question he proceeded to look in the pockets of the injured man for the purpose of discovering his identity. As it happened, Hubert had neither his card-case, letters, or memoranda, about him—not a line, in fact, to indicate who he was, and this being so, the policeman suggested the propriety of his being taken to a hospital.

The blind woman heard the suggestion, and negatived it at once.

"Let him be brought to my house. I am to blame for his present condition, and surely I may be allowed to do what I can to remedy it," she said. "My home is quite close at hand—closer than any hospital."

"Are you aware what you propose to undertake, madam?" said the surgeon (whose name was Carew). "This gentleman's recovery—supposing he does recover—will be a long and tedious affair, and he will require the utmost care and attention."

"I am quite willing to promise that he shall have it," she responded, quickly. "No efforts on my part shall be spared in tending him, and I can answer for my servant as well."

"Where is your house?"

"In Maitland Park crescent—quite close at hand."

"In that case I think the gentleman had better be removed at once," said the surgeon; and after a little conversation with the policeman the latter called a cab, and Hubert was gently placed within it, Mr. Carew accompanying, and followed by the blind lady and her attendant in a second cab.

Who shall say that anything in this world happens by chance, or that the smallest incident does not play a part in that mysterious chain of circumstances that enfolds us all?

The simple fact of Hubert having, in his preoccupied state of mind, turned to the right



instead of the left when he was leaving Russell-square, was destined to lead to events which, but for that trivial circumstance, would never have taken place, and which were destined to exercise the most important influence over two or three of the characters in this history.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

ARRAS the scene in the library Lady Carlyon was taken upstairs by Dr. West in a half-hysterical condition, and then consigned to the care of Robson, who administered restoratives, and took precautions that no servant should be allowed access to her mistress's chamber.

Meanwhile, the physician and his patron were downstairs, deep in consultation.

"I must confess," said the former, "I am not altogether satisfied with the result of my experiment, for I had no idea Lady Carlyon would retain so distinct an impression of what had occurred. However, I did my best, so you cannot attach any blame to me."

"I don't blame you," returned Sir Ascot, moodily, "but I really think I have got myself into deeper difficulties than before. You heard what she said about publishing the affair. I know her quite well enough to be sure she is capable of accomplishing her threat, and then think of the consequences!"

"I know—they would mean ruin for both."

"Yes, and a criminal prosecution as well."

"It must never come to that. Surely we shall be able to find means of preventing it!" exclaimed Dr. West, biting his moustache in angry perplexity. "The only thing we can trust to is time. Women never stop to consider—they act on the spur of the moment, reckless of consequences; but if you can make them pause, if you force them to think of ulterior results, then there is a chance of their listening to reason. You must virtually imprison your wife for a time."

"But how? I dare not do it in this house," said Sir Ascot, looking at the door with a frown. "No, I never thought of suggesting such a thing. I have an idea much more likely to succeed. You have heard me mention my brother-in-law, Felton?"

"Yes."

"Well, he has taken a house in W—shire for the purpose of receiving patients who are not quite capable of taking care of themselves—or, if you like it better, whose relatives desire to be relieved of the responsibility of taking care of them. His place is in the heart of the country, very lonely, and well guarded, and he asks no questions concerning his patients, which you must acknowledge, is a great advantage. I would suggest your placing your wife there for an indefinite period—say until she swears a solemn oath to hold her tongue as to what has taken place."

Sir Ascot pondered the advice for a few minutes. He had gone too far to retreat now, and if he let matters stay as they were he would probably find himself in a dilemma from which there was no chance of extricating himself. No, he must go on in the evil path he had chosen, let it lead him where it might.

This is the usual result of a bad beginning. The consequences of an evil action are like the circles that eddy round a stone that is thrown in the water—widening, until they stretch over the whole of a life.

When Sir Ascot began his system of persecuting his wife he had fancied a little perseverance on his part would be all that was required, and would probably have recoiled with horror from the notion of imprisoning her in a private lunatic asylum; but now it commended itself as being the only feasible plan, and he became anxious that it should be put in execution.

"What about the necessary preliminaries—the certificates, &c.?" he asked.

"Oh, I will arrange all that. I will telegraph for a doctor I know to come down from London, and when I tell him I have

examined the case, and pronounced an opinion, he will accept his fee and make no difficulties. I think you may leave that to me, Sir Ascot."

The baronet thought so too, and Dr. West justified his confidence, for the next morning the physician from town arrived, had a consultation with Dr. West, a few minutes' talk with Lady Carlyon, then shook his elderly head, said it was a "sad case," wrote out a certificate, ate a good lunch, and drank no inconsiderable quantity of Sir Ascot's Madeira, and, after pocketing a substantial fee, returned to Cavendish-square with the impression that he had done rather a good stroke of business.

The task of conveying poor Alicia from the Chase presented very few difficulties, for although she resolutely declined taking any of Dr. West's medicines, it was easy enough for Robson to administer a drug that rendered her unconscious of what was going on around her, and afterwards she retained no distinct impression of the journey, beyond the fact of being borne swiftly along in a closed carriage, Dr. West opposite her, and Robson at her side.

When she quite recovered her senses she found herself in a room that was strange to her—a rather lofty apartment, redolent of the damp smell that is generated by unoccupied houses, and with a barred window that was further darkened by the shade of an immense cedar, whose boughs nearly touched the frosted panes. She turned round and saw Robson at her side, dark, impassive, as usual, and engaged in her customary occupation of knitting.

Strange to say some instinct gave Lady Carlyon a suspicion of what had happened—her mind, so far from being weakened by the opiate administered, seemed to have become keener and more vigorous.

"I am not at home, Robson," she said, quietly, raising herself on her elbow, and looking round.

"No, my lady."

"What house is this?"

"One Sir Ascot has selected for you to live in, so as to be under the constant care of a physician—Dr. West's brother-in-law, who is the master of the house."

"Is Sir Ascot here?"

"No, he went away directly he saw you safely to the end of your journey. He told me to tell you he would come again at the expiration of a week, and see if you were more reasonable than you had been at the Chase—those were his exact words," said Robson, going on with her knitting, and not raising her eyes.

Alicia was silent for a few minutes, striving to thoroughly realise her position. Presently she laid her hand on her maid's wrist.

"Robson," she said, a pathetic quiver in her voice that she tried in vain to restrain, "they accuse me of being mad, and they would shut me up here in order to persuade the world of the truth of their wicked invention: Will you not help me? You, who know I am not mad?"

Robson quietly removed the slim fingers, and went on with her work.

"My lady, I am only an ignorant woman, and I should not presume to set up my opinion against that of doctors who have studied the subject all their lives, and therefore know all about it."

"Then," exclaimed Alicia, "do you mean to infer that you think they are right?"

"I do not think anything at all, my lady. People in my position obey orders without thinking."

The woman was as hard as steel, and as cold. Prayers and entreaties would have affected her nature much as a shower of rain affects a rock, and this Lady Carlyon recognised.

She had only one interest in life—herself; only one object—self-aggrandisement. Sir Ascot paid her well at present, and more than that, she saw in him a mine of wealth in the

future, for would she not have a hold on him in the knowledge she possessed? and would he not secure her a handsome income for keeping it secret?

So far from feeling pity for Lady Carlyon, she was inclined to regard her as a woman who had had chances, and who had not availed herself of them. She did not like her—she did not dislike her. Her feelings in all that did not concern herself were apt to be neutral, and they were in this instance.

Alicia made a desperate effort to keep herself calm; she saw how much depended on her demeanour now, and she resolved that come what might she would not give way to the despair that was threatening to overwhelm her.

"What is the name of the man who keeps this house?" she asked, and Robson was astonished at the composure of her tone and manner.

"Dr. Felton."

"Has he a wife?"

"No, she is dead, I believe."

"I suppose I can see him?"

"I have no doubt you can if you wish, my lady."

"Then kindly ring the bell, and inquire for him."

Robson did as she was requested, and the bell was answered by a woman who unlocked the door before she came in, and looked it again after having received Lady Carlyon's message.

Presently Dr. Felton himself entered—a middle-aged man, with a yellow face, and no hair on the top of his head, but with a big, bushy, black beard, and glittering black eyes, that lent a curiously sardonic expression to his countenance.

He bowed, and took a seat opposite Alicia, who had risen from her couch, and now stood beside it, one hand resting on the head.

"You wished to see me, Lady Carlyon."

"Yes, I want to ask you on what ground you are keeping me here?" she said, steadily, though her heart sank as she saw the kind of man she had to deal with.

"Your husband's authority."

"Are you under the impression that I am not in my right senses?"

"I hold the certificates of two doctors to that effect," he returned, suavely.

"And you believe what they say?"

"I have no reason to doubt it."

Alicia drew a long breath, and pressed both her hands across her breast.

"Do you really mean me to understand that you think the woman who speaks to you at this moment is insane?" she demanded, looking him full in the face.

He returned her gaze unflinchingly.

"Perhaps not at the present moment. In our worst cases we have lucid intervals; but, although at this precise juncture you may be perfectly sane and answerable for your actions, I have no guarantee that by this time-to-morrow you will not be a raving lunatic."

"Do you think it likely?"

"As likely as not."

"But I tell you it is not so! I am no more mad than yourself. I am sane, and it is in order that my husband may avail himself of my money that he has resorted to such vile measures for getting me out of the way. 'Sir!'—she came towards him, her hands outstretched, her voice faltering for the first time—"you are an Englishman—a gentleman—will you not prove your right to both those titles by helping a persecuted woman, who cannot help herself? For the sake of those you love, for the sake of your own children, if have any; for the sake of the mother who cared for and tended your infancy, I beg you to release me!"

He heard her unmoved. Once he put his hand to his moustache as if to conceal a smile, and his eyes, as they scanned her fair, troubled face, never lost their hard expression.

"Madam, you ask me a thing that is impossible, at all events at present. Only time will permit me to judge of your mental con-



FATALITY TO A HEART OF STONE

dition,"and when some weeks have expired I may be in a position to tell you my own opinion regarding your case; at present I can do nothing but acquiesce in the judgments arrived at by your medical attendant and a distinguished London physician. I deeply regret the necessity that compels me to say this"—he rose as he spoke, apparently with the intention of leaving—"but if your state of mind is what you say it is, you will recognise the fact that I have no alternative."

She saw that nothing she could say would produce any impression upon him, that words, in effect, were so much waste of breath. Whatever he thought of her it was clear he was resolved she should not go away.

"Very well, then," she said, quietly, "I suppose I must submit, and bear my fate as well as I can. Will you tell me what rules or restrictions I am to be under?"

"Not very hard ones. You will certainly have to confine yourself to these two apartments, your bedroom and sitting-room; but you will be allowed an hour's exercise every day in the grounds, in company with your own attendant."

"And books, papers—are they allowed me?"

"I regret to say not. Sir Ascot's orders are strict on the subject. He desires you shall have nothing at all to excite you, and I am forced to agree in the wisdom of his decision."

"I may have writing materials, surely?"

"That would be even worse than books," observed Dr. Felton, shrugging his shoulders.

"No, you are to observe the most perfect quiet, as that is supposed to be the only means of your regaining your mental equilibrium. I am afraid I must leave you now," he added, looking at his watch. "I have an appointment in a few minutes that I am bound to keep. Good-day, Lady Carlyon; I sincerely hope the repose that you will enjoy under my roof may prove beneficial to you."

He bowed with punctilious politeness, and retired, locking the door after him.

No sooner had he gone than all Alicia's calmness deserted her, and she flew to the window, first of sitting-room then of bedroom, and examined them, both with the same result. The bars were firm; and, besides, the distance to the ground was too great for anyone to think of jumping, even if they had not been. Of course, too, both doors were locked.

The prospect to be seen through the upper panes—the lower were, as has been before remarked, all frosted—was, at this season of the year, peculiarly dismal. There were a great many trees about, too many by half to be healthy, and from most of these the leaves were stripped, and were lying rotting on the ground. The plantation of shrubs was bounded by a high wall, beyond which Alicia supposed the road must lie; and on one side of the house was a dark still pool of stagnant water, so black, so rippleless, that one involuntarily shuddered in gazing at it.

"If I am not mad now this place is enough to drive me mad," she muttered to herself, as she sat down again on hearing Robson's step outside the door.

Rebellion, as she knew, was useless. She might weep more tears than Niobe, they could be of no avail. She might shriek her loudest, no one would hear her. All she could do would be to submit—at least with a semblance of calmness—to a destiny against which she was powerless to battle.

And so the days went on—dull, monotonous, uneventful—each one a replica of the others. She had no work to do, no books to read, nothing but to sit still and think, except for the one hour a-day during which she took her promenade in the grounds, with Robson at her side. The latter when she was with her rarely spoke, and the sound of voices grew strange to Alicia.

Sometimes a terrible despair seized upon her, and a fervent prayer went up from the bottom of her heart that Heaven would take her to itself, for life was growing a burden too

great to be borne. Then thoughts of little Douglas came, and the desire to live revived, for if she went who would there be to look after him in the future?

She grew pale and thin and naggard, her appetite failed, and she was unable to sleep. Oh! the dreariness of the long, long nights, when she lay listening to the beating of the rain on the windows, the mournful sobbing of the wind round the chimneys, while nearer was a sound that disturbed her still more—the noise of rats eating at the wainscot.

Awful visions came to her—memories of stories she had read in her girlhood, where rats had come and gnawed at living people, and imagination pictured them so powerfully that she would start up shrieking, and fancying she felt the vermin crawling over her.

She was not allowed a light, or all these terrors might have been avoided, but it was one of the rules of the place that none of the patients should have the mercy of a candle vouchsafed them. And who shall say what fiendish motive prompted the restriction, or how many were really benefitted of their senses by the terrors of the lonely midnight darkness?

(To be continued.)

THERE are certain things so sure to be needed in every life that they ought to command particular attention in youth. Every child should be accustomed to express himself freely and often, both in speaking and writing, and be taught the proper methods of doing both; he should become used to the presence of strangers and the attentions due to them; he should be habituated to changes of scenes and employment, and, above all, should be led to fix his attention upon things outside of himself, so as to save him from that self-consciousness which lies at the root of much painful bashfulness, timidity, and nervous apprehension.





["NOEL! NOEL! I AM SO GLAD TO MEET YOU. THAT HORRID MAN!"]

## NOVELLETTE.]

## A BLOT ON THE 'SCUTCHEON.

## CHAPTER V.—(continued.)

"Is the Countess of Marindin masquerading?" Lady Silver asks, with a sneer, "and does she know in whose clothes she is decked? No?" she goes on, as Marian stands before her silent. "No, well I'll tell you then. Mistress Dorothy, whose portrait you see there, was the only child of a rich and noble man. Spoiled and wayward, she grew to womanhood without a single wish ungratified, and when her groom, Will Darnell, a man of singular personal beauty, made love to her, she chose to marry him privately, and chose also to tire of him a year or two later when a certain Noel Tenterville came to woo, and wished to make her Countess of Marindin and mistress of all his broad lands and old titles. Her marriage was as nothing to her. She took her foster-mother, a wicked old crone, into her counsels, and locked her handsome husband up in one of the dungeons under her father's castle, and became Countess of Marindin, queening it for many years among the great and the grand of the land. At last, however, Darnell escaped from his dreadful prison, and coming to the Royal exposed her infamy and wickedness. Noel Tenterville's heart was broken; he loved her better than life, and would have cherished her still, but his family made him drive out the wretch who had brought shame on our stainless name. She died in the streets of London, and the Earl succumbed to his grief, the title and estate going to his brother, while Will Darnell joined a gang of highwaymen, and was hanged at Tyburn; so you see Madame Dorothy was a double murderess, and did herself little good. Do you like my story?" asks Lady Silver, her cruel eyes on Marian's pallid face. "They say that whoever does that forget-me-not robe will come to grief and share something of the fate of

Dorothy Darnell. Let us hope it won't be so in *your* case," and with this parting shot she gathers up her habit and goes away, an evil smile on her lips.

"Oh, Lady Marindin, I am so very, very sorry," gasps Ada, tearfully, who has listened to the story with open eyes.

"Never mind, child, it was not your fault. You could not tell. Help me to take them off," and she tears the broad bands from her throat and arms, tossing them into the coffer, and flings off the costly sacque with a shudder, while the girl slips on her own little *brodequins*, and puts the high-heeled shoes and other items with the dress.

"We must turn the picture back."

They go into the further room, but it is with an uncontrollable feeling of horror that the Countess once more faces the look in the pictured eyes.

The last rays of the setting sun stream in redly full on the portrait. The lips seem to move, the orbs to sparkle. With a shudder Marian exerts all her strength, and the picture falls back to its old position.

"Where have you been?" asks the Earl, meeting them in the long corridor leading from the east wing.

"Ada wanted to explore the old rooms in the other wing, so we spent the afternoon there."

Her voice sounds strained and harsh, her husband looks at her curiously. "Not a very good place for you; too damp and cold. I would rather you did not go there again. You look so pale now."

"I shall not want to," she answers, with a little forced laugh. "I am cold, and shall be all right by the time I am dressed for dinner," and she goes on to her room and kneels before the fire and stares at the glowing embers, a foreboding of coming evil on her, a strange depression, a sort of conviction that the happy days of her early married life have gone never to return.

Yet she schools her face to calmness, and

when she sweeps from her room in a dress of costly black lace enlivened by great scarlet blossoms, she looks so beautiful, so regal, that the Earl's heart gives a bound to think that he, and he alone, possesses such loveliness.

All that night she is wildly merry, singing his favourite songs, chatting with Ada, and forcing herself to be graciously polite to Lady Silver, who watches her furtively.

So the days go on, and chill December has come.

There are to be grand doings at the Royal for Christmas. The castle is filling rapidly. Gay voices echo through the corridors, and the sound of light footsteps patter on the oak boards.

All is bright, mirthful, joyful, within its stone walls, all save the heart of its fair mistress, and dull despair has laid his black touch on her.

All her guests have been skating on the lake; she has left them to go to the village and see a poor woman who is in a rapid decline. She has been alone, not wishing any of her light-hearted guests to accompany her on her sad errand, and, in her pity for the lonely creature, has stayed rather late. Now with her costly sables wrapped round her, she is speeding back to the castle through the semi-gloom of the early winter night.

Once, twice she fancies she hears steps behind her, and when she is half way through the Chase at the loneliest part, the fancy becomes a certainty—there is someone following her.

Instinctively she stops, another moment and a man stands beside—a man ragged and tattered, with a lean, hungry face and a dark, close-cropped head.

"Adrienne!"

One word, only one word, hissed out on the still night air; but Lady Marindin as she hears it knows that her peace and prosperity are threatened; her adored husband's honour in jeopardy, and with the sudden horror that overwhelms her at that name—the sudden

awful despair—feels that for her the bitterness of death is past.

"You!" Her white lips can frame no more.

"Yes, it is I," responds the man, in a low, sullen tone. "You don't seem glad to see me."

"I—I heard you—were dead," she falters.

"Really, now?" he responds, with a sneer. "Well, you see I'm not. The bullets that flew about so thickly the night I and some others escaped from Boulogne didn't harm me, though Gervoise Deschappelle, who was extremely like me, was hit in the left breast, and fatally wounded. He died, and they thought it was me, and entered me as 'dead' in their register. I escaped, and managed to come here to England, and they think he is at large, so I am pretty safe."

"You have managed very well for yourself," he goes on, after a pause. "I, the husband, am starving out in the cold, while you, the wife, live on the fat of the land. A pretty state—"

"Oh, hush, hush!" she implores, wringing her hands.

"Why should I 'hush'?" he asks, insolently. "I am hungry, ragged, just out of gaol, where I have done three months for poaching a beggarly goose out of Marindin Chase. The fellow who calls himself your husband got me that, came him! You are in purple and fine linen, a great lady, honoured and respected. Does the difference between our positions strike your ladyship as great?"

"What have you come here for? What do you want?" she asks wearily, taking no notice of the taunt.

"First and foremost I want money, and when you have given me that I shall be ready and willing to take anything you as a dutiful wife may have to give me. That locket and chain, for example, that hangs round your throat, to begin with."

"I can't give you that," murmurs Marian, shrinking back. "It contains Noel's photograph."

"Well, give me something. I'm hungry. Do you understand?"

"Yes." She gropes for her purse, and empties the contents into his outstretched palm, some eight or ten sovereigns.

"This will do for the present, but I shall want more."

"What will buy your silence, your absence?" she asks, wildly. She is too deeply in love with Lord Marindin to be able to judge between right and wrong. She thinks not of the sin of living with him, now she knows her first husband still lives; the only feels that she would give all she possesses to ensure Léon's departure.

"Well, a good round sum to set me up in the world. Say five thousand pounds."

"Impossible. I could not get such a sum." Her voice is full of despair.

"Very well," he replies, doggedly; "then I shall stay in the neighbourhood, and shall expect to be liberally supplied by my wife. What pin money do you get?"

"Four hundred a-year. I will give you two of it if you will go away and leave me in peace."

"It isn't enough, my lady, though I shall be glad to accept that amount from your fair hands this day week. It will be Christmas Eve. I've heard about the entertainment you are going to give your servants and tenants that night. Everyone will be engaged, so you can slip out and bring it to me; or to oblige you I'll come to the outer conservatory door and wait there. Do you consent?"

"Yes," she answers, mechanically.

"Very well, then, I'll let you go now. I suppose you don't care to give me a wife's proper farewell?"—and he bends toward her. With a stifled shriek she pushes away the evil face so near her own, and turning speeds off to the castle.

## CHAPTER VI.

"The setting of a great hope is like the setting of the sun. The brilliancy of our life is gone."

That night Lady Marindin moves among her guests, laughs, talks, sings like an automaton. Her face is deadly pale, and the rich red velvet robe she wears fails to throw a rosy glow over it. Her eyes are wild and strained, her heart seems dead within her breast. It has fallen, the blow she has dreaded. The wretch, who had deceived her ten years before, in early girlhood, when she had thought dead, lived, and had the power to rob her of husband, home, love, respect.

"Noel! Noel! what will my life be worth if I have to part with you," she keeps crying to herself. "My husband! my love!" and all the time, while heart blood and brain burned, she has to smile with suave, studied grace, and play the part of social hostess.

"I wonder what ails her?" thinks Lady Silver, who, watching her closely, sees the look of dumb, awful anguish in the glorious eyes.

"My love, I fear all this gaiety is too much for you, now that you are not very strong," says Lord Marindin, tenderly, when they are alone together in their room.

"Oh! no, Noel, I like it!" she replies, with a feverish assumption of joy.

"Are you quite sure? You must be very careful of yourself, now."

"Yes, yes, of course; and Noel—Noel you will always love me, come what may—good fortune or bad?"

"My dearest, need you ask?" he replies, with exceeding fondness, drawing the white arms round his throat, and holding her close to him. "I shall love you always, happen what may. You are the one and only love of my life," and the wretched woman, leaning on his breast, clings closer to him, and prays that she may die there and then in the safe haven of his strong arms.

"Noel, can you give me a hundred pounds?"

Marian stands in the library beside the Earl, her face half turned aside. It is Christmas-eve morning; to-night she must see the wretch who is really her husband, and give him his hush-money. She has tried in vain to make up the sum he has demanded, and at last, desperate and despairing, she asks for it.

"A hundred pounds; certainly, my love, if you want it," and he writes a cheque for the amount, and hands it to her. "Miller will cash it for you, if you want it done."

"Thanks, yes; and—and Noel, it is my next quarter's allowance in advance. I have been rather extravagant lately."

"By no means," he answers, promptly, "it is a Christmas gift."

"How good you are!" she murmurs, gratefully, stooping to kiss him. "How shall I ever repay you?"

"By loving me," he answers, imprisoning her slender fingers, "and by looking bright and happy as you did when we were first married;" and he gazes with lover-like ardour into the brown orbs, that for seven terrible, weary nights have never closed. "Are you happy, Marian?"

"So happy with you," she whispers, "that sometimes I fear it cannot last."

"It shall last, my wife—my pride. Naught but death can part us now."

"How little he knows what is between us," she moans the whole day through, as she goes from one magnificent apartment to another in her restlessness.

"Have I strength to go through the trial?" she asks herself, when the evening comes and it is time to dress.

"Madam is very pale," says her maid, as she combs and twists the sunny gold-threaded hair. "I should not advise white to-night."

"No; give me a black dress with crimson trimmings;" and addressed—her head crowned with blood-red flowers and sparkling with diamond and ruby butterflies, which glitter as well round her white polished throat and in

the folds of her sweeping gown—she goes down to the great banquet hall, and, sitting on a raised seat with her husband and guests, watches the tenantry and people as they troop in to receive their presents, with hopeless, aching eyes.

At the further end is a huge Christmas-tree, brilliant with the light of many Lilliputian wax tapers, and endless festoons of gay-coloured glass balls. From its branches hang boxes of bon-bons, tinselled crackers, Tangle-rings, grotesque sugar animals and figures, punchinellas, Noah's ark, fan-tailed peacocks, silver and gold watches, and amid the green glisten the bejewelled robes of gaily-dressed dolls, while on the very top of the tall fir is a fairy in flimsy white tulle, with great wings of yellow tissue paper, holding a wand in her waken hand. Underneath, ranged on the table, are the gifts for the older folk. Packages of tea and coffee, substantial parcels of tobacco, pipes, rolls of flannel, warm socks, woolen shawls, striped blankets, and some work-baskets, with dozens of other useful and pretty things.

It has been the custom, from time immemorial, for the Tenterloves to hold high revel for their tenants at Christmas; and all the villagers, from the old crones, wrinkled and yellow with age, to the toddling infants just out of nurse, his to the Royal at that time, to receive the gifts so lavishly bestowed, and which stand them in good need during the cold, dreary winter.

First, the children receive their toys from the wonderful fairy-like tree, which they regard with silent, open-mouthed wonder, until joy at the possession of a fat sugar pig, a scarlet-coated Punchinello, or a basket of sweetmeats loosens their tongues, and there breaks forth a babble of baby-voices.

The children's voices reach Lady Marindin's ears as she sits on her sort of throne, in the magnificent hall of which she is mistress, and strike a chord hitherto silent in her heart.

They are the offsprings of happy women, honest wives; they are legitimate; but her child—which will be born to her when the June roses bloom again—what will it be? she asks herself, with fierce shame, terrible despair. Nameless! its place and position depending on the mercy, the will of a man, who has all the cruel instincts of a jungle tiger! What horror in the thought! The wretched woman, reeling on her satin couch, with the priceless jewels flaming on her breast and brow, clutches her hands together, till the nails bruise and wound the soft, white flesh, and prays it may never see the light of day.

Lady Silver, watching her with the usual intention, feels more than ever convinced that her cousin's wife has some secret; and that the *dénouement* is not far off; and a wild keeling of joy springs up within her at the thought that still she may have a chance of being mistress of Marindin Royal, and fills her eyes with such a look of triumph that it startles Marian as she meets their gaze, rouses her from her reverie, and puts her on her guard. She turns and looks once more across the length of the great hall. The gaffers and gamblers are having their innings, pocketing all the good things with evident relish. She watches the gorgeously arrayed men-servants, who deftly unhook the gifts from the tree and distribute them about; then her gaze wanders round the walls, and rests on the purple velvet hangings and the gold lions and the Van Tol and the Vanderveiden; and the massive plate. It is all so grand, so beautiful, and it is here—here for how long? As long as she can satisfy the greed of the wretch who has her in his power, and how long will that be? She does not know, but a feeling of restlessness takes possession of her as she hears the great clock strikes ten. In two hours that lean, hungry face she hates and dreads will peer through the conservatory door, and she will have to go and give him the money she has begged of the Earl.



Go, notwithstanding the terrible risk she will run of being seen or followed, perhaps by Lady Silver, and her secret discovered. A cold shudder runs through her from head to foot at the thought, and Lord Marindin sees it.

"Are you chilly, my love?" he asks, with tender solicitude.

"No—yes—a little," she answers. "This hall seems draughty to-night."

"It is such very severe weather that any place almost would be cold; though," he continues, looking at the huge logs that glow ruddily in the wide fireplaces at either end, "it ought to be warm here. But we can go now. The tree is stripped of all its bravery, our people are going to the servants' hall for supper, which will occupy them for over an hour, then they return here for a turn at Sir Roger de Coverley before leaving. It is our custom to come for a short time, and watch them desporting themselves. If you feel fatigued there will be no necessity for you to do so."

"I will come for a short time," rejoins Marian, eagerly seeing a way out of the difficulty of keeping her appointment with Léon, "then I can slip away to my room, if you don't mind."

"Yes, dear, you can manage that way."

And they leave the hall by the upper door, and go down through the long corridor to the winter drawing-room—a pleasant apartment, with crimson satin and brocade hangings, on which the firelight plays merrily, bringing out its rich tints, and lighting up the art treasures strewn about. The delicate statues, caskets, tapestries, Dresden and Sevres china, the chairs and seats, which are covered with rare embroideries, part of high-priest's robes, the backs of which are inlaid with gold and ivory, the porphyry pillars, the marble mantelpieces, carved by master hands, the dainty miniatures, the jewelled nicknacks, *Cape di Monte* scent bottles, *Rose du Barry* toupes, Worcester vases, thickly crusted with turquoise, Venetian mirrors, things rare, lovely, antique, the *bris-a-bras* of a family several centuries old.

"This is more comfortable," says the Countess, with a sigh, as she sinks on to a satin couch by the fire.

"Though not so magnificent," remarks Lady Silver, who stands near. "Perhaps you don't like magnificence, as you probably have not been accustomed to it."

"I have been, I should think, as much accustomed to it as you have in your own home for some years past," retorts Marian, roused, at last, from her usual sweet-tempered tolerance of the other's unflinching insolence and hardly-veiled scorn. "I suppose you don't know that I am aware to what an extent my husband assists you and yours."

"I did not know," replies the other, unabashed. "I thought, as you have secrets from him, that he might have some kept from you. But it appears that he, being an honourable man, and having nothing shameful in the background, is open as daylight, and tells you everything. What a pity you don't emulate his good example and do likewise."

"I don't understand you." But Marian, as she speaks, feels the blood forsake her face, ebbing slowly to her tortured heart, leaving her white and wan, like one newly-risen from the dead.

"Do you not? Well, you look as though you understand perfectly well, so I am sure you will pardon me if I say that I don't think you are speaking the truth," and, with a sneer on her thin lips, Lady Silver turns away, and, crossing the room, sits down beside Captain Clissold, for whose handsome face she has somewhat of a weakness.

"What does she know? What does she know?" means the wretched woman by the fire to herself, her last ray of hope dying out, for she realizes that from Silver she can expect little pity.

"Marian, will you come and sing, dear?"

asks Lord Marindin, as Ada Palmer strikes the final chords of a brilliant fantasia.

"Yes, if you wish it."

She dare not refuse, and rising slowly, goes over to the piano.

"What shall it be?"

"Douglas, of course, my favourite," he replies with a laugh, not turning to look at her, but bending over the music-wagon.

Ada, though, sees her pallor, and in a low tone begs her not to sing.

"I must, child," she answers. "Never mind me. Go and chat to Captain Clissold, he is alone again; the Duke of Paulton has engrossed Lady Silver."

Obediently the young girl goes, and taking the seat the Duke's daughter has vacated, begins talking to the light-hearted linesman, quite unconscious that her dark, pretty face is becoming very dear to him, and that he is studying it intently with his bright blue eyes.

Presently Lady Mandarin's voice rings out through the room, pathetic, thrilling, yet not so clear or powerful as usual,—

"Stretch out your hands to me, Douglas! Douglas! Drop forgiveness from Heaven like dew, As I lay my heart on your dead heart, Douglas! Douglas, Douglas, tender and true!"

"I remember, now," remarks Roland Clissold, thoughtfully, as the last sad notes die away, "where it was I saw Lady Marindin before her marriage."

"Do you?" says his companion.

"Yes. You are great friends, are you not?"

"Yes. Lady Marindin has been more than kind to me; I love her dearly."

"She is worthy of it; a most amiable, charming woman. I may tell you, as I suppose you know something of her past, I heard her sing at a concert in America."

"Yes. She has told me she was a singer."

"Has she told you anything more?"

"No!"

"I don't think she is happy."

"I am afraid not," replies Ada, with a sigh.

"I wish we could help her, if she is in trouble."

"I wish so, too, but—"

"Ada, Captain Clissold," breaks in Marian's voice, "are you not coming to see our people dance?"

"Of course we are," Lady Mandarin, responds the young fellow, gaily, "we would not lose such a sight for the world," and rising, he offers his arm to Miss Palmer, and they follow in the wake of the Earl and Countess, with the other guests.

The squeaky sounds of a fiddle strike their ears as they enter the hall, backed by the shrill whistle of a piccolo and the deeper tones of a harp.

The villagers have chosen the musicians themselves. They are a trio well known on the village green, before the ale-house at Marindin, and the lads and lasses foot it away, right merrily, to the strains of Sir Roger; rushing half the length of the great hall to meet their partners, twisting, twirling, bounding, hopping, displaying an astonishing amount of energy, and appearing almost unconscious of the aristocratic eyes that survey them with languid astonishment.

Their hearts, and maybe their heads, too, are warm from the draughts of nut-brown ale they have taken, so tempting on that cold night, with the little roasted apples bobbing up and down in the seething, frothy liquid. They don't think so much of the presence of the "quality," as they would in calmer moments, and are only intent on enjoying themselves.

"How happy they are! How I envy them!" thinks the miserable woman who bears the proud title, Countess of Marindin; then as the clock booms out the hour of midnight she remembers her appointment, and shrinks away from the Earl's side, further and further into the shade thrown by the organ gallery, till she is near the door.

"If Noel asks for me, say I have gone to my room, I am tired," she says wearily to Ada Palmer as she passes out.

"Yes," assents the girl, looking at her with astonished eyes; there is such awful anguish on her face.

Lady Silver misses her a little later from her place by the Earl's side.

"Where is she, I wonder?" she mutters, her keen eyes on the alert. "Not anywhere here. Something will happen to-night. Perhaps she has gone to meet some man; I will follow and see," and she moves towards the door by which Marian has just left; but Clissold, knowing instinctively that this cold-eyed, thin-lipped woman hates his friend's wife, and intends to follow her only to pry into her secrets, stops her, and manages to prevent her leaving the hall for some time.

## CHAPTER VII.

THROUGH the long corridor Lady Marindin speeds, fear lending wings to her feet. She will be safe, she feels; for twenty minutes after that the villagers will be going to their respective homes, her guests will be leaving the banquet hall; her servants, who now are all collected watching the dancing, will be coming to put out the lights and securely bar windows and doors for the night; thieves and burglars are not unknown at Marindin, the rich things in the castle proving an attraction to the light-fingered gentry.

On she goes, holding a light woollen shawl closely round her throat and shoulders. On through the summer drawing-room, which looks ghostly, with its white satin drapings and few candles; on through the house conservatory to the outer one, which is dimly lighted with only a lamp here and there, the servants supposing no one would go to it on such a chill night. She pauses for a moment on the threshold, and holds both hands on her heart to still its frantic beats. It feels like a living thing caged in her breast, trying to break from its prison; then she goes straight across to the door, where a pale, evil face is pressed against the glass, and unbells it.

"You have come, then?" he says, a ring of triumph in his tone, as he makes a move to step in.

"You had better not come in," she whispers.

"Some one may see you."

"Pooh! nonsense! This place is too far from the hall and too cold to prove inviting to any of your grand friends. We are safe here."

"I am not so sure of that. A cousin of my—hu—of Lord Marindin's suspects something. She watches me, and may have followed."

"You say that to scare me," cried the man, as his livid face turned a shade paler. "I can't see anyone," and he peers down the long vista of tropical plants. "I must come in; I've been out in that freezing cold, waiting for you, over an hour. I'll shut the door and stand by it; if anyone comes I'll be out like a flash of lightning."

"What have you brought me?" he asks, after a moment.

"Two hundred pounds," and she gives him a canvas bag full of sovereigns.

"Thanks, *ma chère*, Addienne. This I look upon as a forerunner of better things to come. Nothing like money. The little you gave me the other day has shown me what a power it is. You see I look quite respectable now, with a good coat on my back, and I'm not hungry, but I spent the last sov. to-day at Clintbury for my dinner and my ticket across to here, so this just comes in nicely," and he taps the bag till the coins clink.

"When shall I call on your ladyship for some more?" he goes on, greed in his keen black eyes.

"I will give you the same sum six months hence," she answers, coldly.

"That won't do, Madame Léon, that won't do," he answers, insolently. "I shall want some before that."

"You cannot have it. I must keep part of my allowance to pay my milliner's and dress-maker's bills. Would you take everything?"

"Pooh! my love; more nonsense. The Earl, your husband, I'm told, loves you to dis-

traction; he will find it a pleasure to pay your little bills."

"And how am I to account for the expenditure of my allowance?"

"Tell him you have been somewhat extravagant, and have outrun the constable."

"Impose on his generosity to satisfy your demands? No, I will not do it."

"Well, if you don't like that plan you can try another. Those diamonds you wear are very handsome," says Léon, fixing his sinister eyes on the flashing butterflies, glittering amid the coils of her hair and the folds of her dress. "They must be worth £10,000. Hand some of them over to me."

"I cannot. They do not belong to me," replies Marian, drawing the shawl closer round her throat, and regretting bitterly that she has donned them, coming to meet the insatiable ruffian before her.

"How do you make that out! What is yours is his and what is his is yours."

"No, everything is his. I had hardly anything when I married him."

"When you what?" he cries, sneeringly. "Can a woman have two husbands?"

"Oh! hush, hush!" she cries imploringly, throwing up her hands.

"No I won't hush," he answers brutally, "unless you pay me well to do so."

"What am I to do?" she asks dreadingly, her face whiter than the marble figure against which she leans. "I give you all I can."

"Don't tell me that," he answers fiercely; "a woman in your position must have heaps of money; heaps of jewels."

"You ought to help me for the sake of the past," he goes on, coaxingly, as she remains silent. "For the sake of the tie between us. I am your husband. You loved me once."

"No, I think not. I wonder you mention the past to me," replies Marian, looking straight at him, with eyes that blazed with scorn and contempt. "You flattered my girlish vanity, but I know now that I never loved you—never, even in my maddest, weakest moments."

"Well, it doesn't much matter if you did or not; the question is, do you want to stay with the man who fancies he is your lord and master and whom you fancy you love?"

"You know I do."

"Then buy my silence. Give me five thousand pounds down and I'll leave for America; then I shall be very happy, when I am comfortably settled there, to write and let you know where you can send me the two hundred quarterly, and anything else besides that you can get."

"Impossible! I could not get such a large sum."

"There are the diamonds."

"They are heirlooms. Their loss would be noticed at once."

"You have others."

"Yes."

"Well, let me have this set for a time; I will have them copied in paste, and return the imitation jewels to you. No one will be the wiser, save you and I."

"I cannot. Lord Marindin might ask me any night to put them on; and what could I say?"

"Certainly that might be awkward," replies the subtle ruffian, trying to tempt her to her ruin. "Stay," he adds eagerly, "I have another idea—a better one. Leave those diamonds and some other jewels in your dressing-room some night when you go to dinner, and just leave this door unbolted. I can slip in and get up to your room without much difficulty. I have very little doubt. I shall put on livery, and if seen by your maid or any one will be taken for one of the footmen. Then I will get clear off, and leave the country and you in peace. A good plan, don't you think so, *cherie*?"

"No."

"Will you agree to it?"

"Agree to it! What, become a common hief and the aider and abettor of one!—rob the man who is dearer to me than life, fame,

everything! No—a thousand times no. I would rather die than consort with or countenance such a degraded wretch as yourself."

"Take care, take care," he hisses, his face livid with rage; "a few words from me, and your proud head will be brought low. I am your master by law, remember. I can take you from your grand home—your dainty surroundings—to live in a hovel with me. You are in my power. I'll give you a week to think over it."

"I know it," she answers, the despair of a hunted stag brought to bay in her great eyes; "do your worst. Anything would be better than the anguish I suffer now. I have lived a lifetime of misery during this past week."

"That's all very fine," he begins, "but you—." Then suddenly, without a word, he opens the door and slips through, shutting it after him; and Marian, turning to see the cause of his sudden flight, finds herself face to face with Lady Silver. For a few minutes the two women stand there in the dim light looking at each other; the mask dropped from either face, envy and hatred on one, scorn and contempt on the other.

"So," ejaculates the Duke's daughter, "Lady Marindin finds it pleasanter to meet her lover in a dim conservatory than to watch her husband's tenantry dance jigs and hornpipes. The one pastime is exciting and romantic, the other commonplace and wearying. I congratulate your ladyship on your taste, too; for, if I mistake not, the person you were speaking to now is the man caught poaching some months ago in the Chase. Pretty company, truly, for the mistress of the Royal. Haven't you anything to say?" she goes on, as Marian keeps silent. "Any excuse to make, any—"

"Why should I excuse my conduct to you?" she asks, proudly.

"Well, because, unless I know why you give meetings to strange men, in remote parts of the Castle at midnight, I shall consider it my duty to tell Noel about the affair."

"I should not advise you to do so?"

"Why not?"

"Because he will think it a base tale of slander, got up by you to part us; because you are jealous of me—jealous that he chose me for love, and passed by you, the woman who would have wedded him thankfully. I shall deny your story; you have no proof, and it will be regarded as a falsehood by my husband! Let me pass!" continues Marian, imperiously, seeing she has gained an advantage; "and do not dare again to follow me, or play the spy!" and, sweeping on, she leaves Lady Silver, alone, checkmated, in the dim conservatory.

"Lady Marindin!" exclaims Ada, as Marian enters the winter drawing-room, which is vacant save for the linesman and his little love, who has just promised to be his wife; "I thought you had gone to your room long ago."

"I meant to, dear, but felt restless—as though I could not sleep. My head ached, so I was glad to get away from the music and noise in the hall."

"I should think so! How ill you look! Let me get you something."

"No—no! It is nothing. I shall be better to-morrow after a good sleep. Where is Noel?"

"In the smoking-room," answers Gilead.

"Ah!" interjects his hostess, with a look of relief on her wan face. "Good-night now. You young people ought to be getting to bed; it is very late," and she turns and leaves the room just as Lady Silver comes in, going slowly up to her bower of satin and lace, and wondering as she goes if in all the wide world there is another heart as sad and heavy as hers.

The next morning there is a great commotion at Castle Royal. The outer conservatory door is found unfastened, and several valuable things have been purloined from the drawing-rooms. A couple of daggers with jewelled handles, a silver sackpot, a set

of antique Venetian jewellery, a gold card-case, cameos, and mosaics in rare settings, some miniatures, and several other small things.

"I can't understand it," says the Earl, at breakfast. "Martin says he was most particular last night in seeing that every window and door was bolted and barred before they went to the hall. I wonder how I thieves among my own people?"

"You can never tell, of course, whom you harbour in a large establishment like this," remarks Lady Silver, her eyes fixed maliciously on Marian's face. "You may have a reptile amid your people who will turn and sting the hand that feeds it."

"Of course," he assents. "Still, I think all my servants are honest. I shouldn't like to think they weren't. It is very strange! No one seems to have been near the place from about ten till one. I suppose the thief must have got in then and hidden himself. But how did he get in?"

"Perhaps your wife can enlighten you," says his cousin, in clear, cold tones. "She was, I believe, in that part of the Castle last evening."

"Marian!" ejaculates the Earl, turning and looking at her. "Were you near the conservatories last night, my love?"

"Yes," she answers, quite calmly, showing nothing of the awful fear and horror that is on her. "When I left the hall I went to the red-room for a shawl I had left there, and thought I heard a noise in the summer drawing-room, so went to look, but saw nothing, neither there nor in the conservatory. I suppose the thief must have concealed himself on hearing me."

"Yes. But what a risk you ran! You might have been killed by the ruffian!" and Lady Silver, seeing the look of unutterable awe he turns on Marian, grinds her teeth with impotent rage, and feels that she had better keep silent till she has proofs to back the story she has to tell.

It proves rather a dreary Christmas Day to all in the Castle. The snow falls so heavily that it is impossible to drive to church, and it is a relief when the dinner hour comes and they troop in to the great hall, decked with ivy and holly.

The week glides away like a dream to Marian—a painful dream, it is true, but the misery and fear she has experienced are telling on her—she is becoming apathetic. She knows Léon will keep his word and contrive to see her again—to tempt her to rob the Earl; and though she is certain he is the thief who committed the audacious robbery on Christmas Eve she knows the man too well to think that will keep him away.

Her husband's good wishes for the New Year seem a mere mockery to her. In a year—nay, in a week, a day, she may be an outcast far away from all she loves and prizes.

"Will you come for a walk, Lady Marindin?" asks Ada in the afternoon, "you look so white. You are thinking too much of this ball you give to-morrow night."

"No, dear," she answers, truthfully, "I have scarcely thought of it at all." Which is the truth. Far more serious things have filled her mind for many days than the mere giving of a dance; and as she dons her velvet mantle, trimmed with costly sables, she wonders, vaguely, when she will see the man she dreads and fears more than any one else in the whole world.

They go out together, the Countess and her little friend, and wander away through the Home-park to the Chase. It is a fairy-like scene; the powdery snow stretches like a mantle over the bosom of the earth, and clings in fantastic wreaths and festoons to the bare branches of the great forest trees; the sky is blue. The wintry sun sheds his pale rays over valley and hill, dale and grove. Away in the distance herd the graceful deer, their dappled bodies thrown out in bold relief against the white background, and now and again from the



snow-laden undergrowth starts a hare, frightened by their footfall.

They go on and on, it is getting late when they turn to go back, and Marian hurries, a strange sense of fear on her. In the park she catches a glimpse of a figure, half hidden behind a tree and knows that it is Léon waiting to waylay her.

"Go on quickly, Ada," she says, quite calmly, "and tell Marie to have tea ready in my room, just for you and I. I feel that I want a cup after being out so long in the cold."

"Don't you mind being left by yourself out here?"

"No. The prospect of tea waiting for me when I come in is too alluring. Make haste, like a good child."

Ada, thus adjured, speeds away with the swiftness of a young fawn. Marian walks on slowly till her friend is some way ahead, and then she turns out of the road and goes straight towards the clump of trees, behind which Léon lurks.

"You are waiting to see me, I suppose," she says, with unnatural calmness, when she reaches them.

"Yes. The week's grace is up to-day. I want your answer to my proposal."

"You have had it already."

"What? Do you still refuse to buy your peace and safety at the price of a few diamonds?"

"I do. I refuse to let a thief into the house of the man who trusts and honours me."

"What a fool you are. Most women would not be so scrupulous."

"That may be; but I refuse to aid or help you in any way. I will give you the two hundred a-year, not a penny more, if you choose to take it; if not, do your worst. I defy you."

"Then I will do my worst," he cries, savagely, "so look to it, my fine madam. I will have the diamonds, and you shall be ousted from your high place as well. You shall be an outcast, a mark for the finger of scorn to point at."

But Marian waits to hear no more; with a low moan she walks away, and when she reaches the Castle and goes up to her room, where Ada is waiting for her, with a dainty tea equipage arranged on a little table before a ruddy fire, she falls down on the tiger-skin, and covering her face with her hands, sobs and moans as though her heart was breaking.

## CHAPTER VIII.

It is the evening of the ball; from basement to garret Marindin Royal is a blaze of light. In the great hall hundreds of rose-coloured wax candles in massive silver sconces shed their beams on the purple velvets and blazoned lions, and the words "Honours before All;" on banks of hot-house flowers and feathery ferns, arranged in every available space; on pretty women, and handsome men, diamond-decked dowagers, and young débutantes in book muslin and blue ribbons.

It is a gay scene. Dancing has commenced, and couples are whirling and revolving down the polished boards, as though waltzing, and waltzing alone, was the only thing worth living for, or exerting oneself over. Near the upper door stand the Earl and Countess, she very lovely, if rather pale, in clouds of billowy tulle over white satin, with great pearls round her polished throat and white arms, looking like an Ice-queen, Noel has told her. Close by is Lady Silver, as usual, in pale blue, with barbaric silver ornaments, and Ada Palmer, with Clissold in close attendance.

"I suppose I must go and ask her Grace of Elmhirat to take a turn," says Noel, with a little grimace.

"I think so," answers Marian, absently, her eyes on the blonde face of her King Olaf, the face that is so very dear to her.

"You send me away from you, then?" he asks, jestingly.

"Because I cannot keep you with me," she

replies, and he wonders at the sudden passion and pain in her eyes. He is so sure of her and her love, he does not dream that anything could ever come between them.

"Lady Marindin, won't you be merciful and give me one dance?" pleads Clissold, as Noel leaves her side.

"Not to-night, if you will excuse me," she answers, gently. "My duties as hostess are too numerous. I shall give to you the pleasanter task of looking after my little Ada."

"I accept the charge," he answers, with a smile, "for to-night and always. You must congratulate us; she has promised to be my wife, and love, honour, and obey."

"I do congratulate you most sincerely, and wish you every happiness it is possible for you to have. I am so glad, dear;" and as she presses Ada's little hands her face for a moment loses its painful look of unrepentance and haunting fear, but it soon returns there; and later on in the evening, when she is strolling up and down the portrait gallery on the Duke of Palliser's arm, Lord Marindin, who is with Silver, gives a low, irrepressible cry, as he sees how white, haggard, and worn she looks.

"I am afraid all this gaiety is not good for Marian. Have you noticed how ill she is looking?"

"No, I have not noticed," replies his cousin, untruthfully, "but I will observe her closely as we pass again, and see;" and as they meet once more she stares insolently at the woman she hates and envies, and she, meeting that cold, cruel glance, trembles a little, and wonders what she is saying to the Earl.

"Well, what do you think?" he queries, anxiously.

"I think she looks ill," replies Lady Silver, deliberately, "haggard and worn, and I am not surprised at it."

"Why?"

"Because she has something on her mind."

"Something on her mind! What do you mean?"

"Well, a woman can't, unless she is very bad—very hardened—live with one man as his wife, and give secret meetings to another, without some pangs of remorse."

"Secret meetings! My wife! Silver! think what you are saying."

"I have thought, Noel, and I speak the truth. Your wife let a man into the outer conservatory on Christmas Eve, and spoke with him for a long time, and again last evening she met him in the Home-park."

"Impossible! You must be mistaken," cries the Earl, white to the very lips.

"It is true. I am not mistaken. Look at her altered face and changed ways! But ask her if you doubt me. She may tell you who he is;" and having gratified her spite and revenge somewhat, Lady Silver goes back to the ball-room with Clissold, who has come to claim her for a dance, and leaves the Earl staring straight before him at the blank space left on the wall by the removal of wicked Madam Dorothy's portrait.

The first doubt he has ever felt with regard to the woman he loves so dearly has entered his soul, and everything seems to be in a whirl around him. He never knows how the rest of the evening passes; he is hardly conscious of anything till the ball is over, the lights out, the guests departed, and he alone in her room with the woman he thinks his wife.

"Marian," he begins, rather sternly, "Silver has told me a queer story about you and some man to-night. I want you to explain away the mystery if you can. Will you?"

"Yes, Noel"—her voice is faint and far away, every vestige of colour has left the lovely face, and the Earl as he looks at her feels his heart sink.

"Who is the man you let into the conservatory on Christmas Eve and met in the park last evening?"

"He is—my—my—"

"What?" he cries, in agony.

"My—"

But ere she can finish a piercing scream rings through the castle, followed by the

report of pistols, succeeded by dreadful cries and a shuffling of feet.

"Great heavens! what can that be?" ejaculates the Earl, and with one bound he is at the door; wrenching it open he rushes through the corridor and down the stairs, followed by Marian in her trailing white dress and costly pearls.

At the foot of the stairs a terrible sight meets their view. Lying back in the arms of one of the footmen is a man with close-cropped dark hair and black moustache. He is evidently mortally wounded; the blood is flowing down over his breast, and on his face is the pallor of fast-approaching death, while sitting on the lowest step, groaning and rubbing his arm, is the butler.

"What is it?" asks the Earl.

"Burglar, my lord," replies the butler, between his groans. "We caught him rifling the wateau-room, and gave chase. He got as far as here, then turned and fired at us, hitting me in the arm. William had the revolver with him (he's always carried it at night since the robbery on Christmas Eve), and he let fly, and hit the fellow in the breast. He's got a mortal wound, I think, my lord."

"Yes," assents his master, scarcely less pale than the dying wretch he bends over.

"Can nothing be done for him?" asks Marian, and then she stifles a cry with difficulty, as she sees the burglar is Adolphe Léon.

At the sound of her voice the dying man uncloses his eyes.

"Addrienne!" he murmurs. "Addrienne!"

Then with a last effort he raises himself on his elbow, and looks at Lord Marindin, who kneels beside him.

"My wife! he mutters. "My wife; not yours," and with a groan falls back in the footman's arms dead.

"He has something in his hand, my lord," says the man; and Noel bends over him and draws away from his clenched fingers a long tress of silky golden hair.

A dreadful feeling comes over him as he looks at it. He knows it is Marian's hair; and as he turns his gaze on her, so changed and cold, she gives a great gasping sob and falls at his feet insensible. He stoops and takes her up in his strong arms, her pale cheek pressed against his breast. How he loves her, even in this moment of awful despair, when he feels certain there has been some guilty tie between her and the wretch lying dead there.

"Take the body to the east wing," he says, briefly, "and communicate with the police. William, gallop over to Clutterby and bring the Doctor; Martin's arm must be seen to." Then he goes up the broad oak stairs with his insensible burden, and puts her on the bed, giving her over to the care of Marie and Ada Palmer, who, with most of the other inmates of the castle have been roused by the firing and noise.

"Come and tell me when she recovers," he says to Ada, "I shall be in the portrait gallery," and he leaves the room with down-drooped head and heavy heart, still holding the tress of hair in his hand.

He paces up and down restlessly, watching the grey wintry dawnbreak over the distant hills, face to face with a great anguish, a great dread. Who is the man who has been shot like a dog by his servants? How had he become possessed of that tress of silky golden threads? What had he meant by saying "My wife, my wife, not yours?" Was it possible that she, Marian, the woman he had loved, trusted, honoured, can have been anything to a man so low and degraded—a poacher, a common thief? No. He drives the horrid thought away, but it steals back with relentless persistency. He knows nothing, absolutely nothing, of her antecedents. He loved and trusted, that was enough for him, and asked not a question of the woman he made his wife. He remembers this now, in his hour of agony. His love, unbonded, overwhelming, has blinded him up to the present; the awakening is terrible, his anguish almost unbearable; and when Ada comes to tell him that

Marian has recovered consciousness, and is asking for him, he flies rather than walks to her room.

She is lying on her couch in a loose white wrapper, which rivals the ashy pallor of her cheeks; her magnificent hair is unbound, and falls about her in wild confusion; her great eyes are heavy with the smart of unshed tears, but never has she looked more lovely; and the Earl, stirred, as all men are, by the sight of physical beauty, feels all the old unconquerable, irresistible love rage in his heart, stronger, more enduring than ever.

"Wife—wife—say that you are mine—mine alone—that it is a lie—a lie—he spoke," he cries, incoherently, flinging himself on his knees beside her, and clasping her in his arms with despairing violence.

"Noel—my love," she answers faintly "be calm, I implore you."

"Calm—how can I be calm?" he goes on, wildly. "Tell me, what was that man to you?"

For a moment there is silence between them, a terrible silence; then she says, speaking still more faintly,—

"My husband!"

"Your husband? and I trusted you—believed in you!"

His arms loose their close clasp and fall by his side, a look of horror, contempt, disgust spreads over his face.

"Noel, dearest, listen to me, only listen. Hear the miserable history of my life; do not condemn me, do not judge me unheard. I am not the guilty wretch you think me."

"Go on," he says, coldly.

"I was the only child of Raoul Comte de Sormine," she begins, in a low, faltering voice, "and Marian Ormond, a singer whom he met and married in England. Four years after my birth my mother died, and my father, not knowing what to do with so young a child, sent me to live with Nancy Peraan, a woman who had been my mother's maid, and who had followed her to France, and married there. I was happy with Nancy who was a kind-hearted soul, and her old husband, who played the violin in the orchestra at the Opera House. They taught me what they could between them, which was very little, for they were ignorant folk, and old Peraan fostered the love and talent I showed for singing. At the age of twelve my father placed me at the *Le nois* school, then one of the best in Paris, and consented to my studying for the musical profession.

"I was there between four and five years, and had always been petted and indulged by Madame Léon, who laboured under the erroneous impression that the Comte was an extremely wealthy man, and wished to bring about a marriage between myself and her son Adolphe, the miserable wretch who lies dead now (these Marian shudders violently). They were crafty, designing, well-versed in the ways of the world. I was innocent, ignorant of all things, a mere child; and, alas! I fell an easy victim to their plots and schemes, and consented to the marriage they proposed.

"I cannot tell you of what followed, the shame, misery, distress of body and soul which I experienced. The monster I called 'husband,' discovered through the sudden death of my poor father, that I was no heiress, but simply penniless, not possessed of a shilling, and his rage knew no bounds. He reviled and abused me, and at last struck me a heavy blow, which rendered me senseless.

"When I recovered, I found I was alone in the room in which they habitually imprisoned me; and mad from the memory of the cowardly blow, and knowing only worse treatment would follow, I determined to escape. My window was not very far from the ground, so I knotted the bed-clothing together and slid down by it, escaping in the dusk of night. I fled straight to the part of Paris where Père Peraan and his wife had resided when I lived with them, and at break of day inquired at the house in which they had rooms, but the portress told me they had left some weeks

before. Luckily for me she knew the street to which they had removed, though not the number, and after spending two hours searching I found them, and was received with open arms.

"I told them part of my troubles, suppressing the fact that I was married, and they promised to protect me to the best of their ability; but had we remained in France, Adolphe Léon would probably have hunted me down, and forced me to go back to him that he might make money of my voice; but Peraan had accepted an engagement in Vienna, and thither we went in less than a week. I disguised as an old woman. Peraan's interest in the musical world brought me into notice, but I dared not accept an engagement in Europe for fear of being seen by the Léons, so accepted one for America, and adopting my mother's name managed to get on fairly well for some four or five years.

"Then an extremely lucrative engagement was offered me in Germany, and wishing to be able to give more comforts to my kind old friends, who were growing old, and wishing also to see them again, I accepted it and came to Europe. For a year all went well. I never sang in large towns or at very good concerts, fearing that I might be seen by my enemy, and at last one night what I dreaded came to pass.

"It was at a little town in North Germany, I had finished my song and was bowing to my applauders, when I caught sight of his face among the audience, and knew from his look that he had recognized me. Fortunately I sang that night in place of a fellow-artiste, so my name was not down in the programme.

"Half dead with fear I went straight to the manager, and told him part of my story. He promised me protection, but when my husband forced his way into our room a dreadful scene took place; he refused to go, and at last was only removed by force.

"There and then I threw up my engagement, forfeiting a large sum of money, and fled secretly in the night, never feeling safe until the sea was between us, and I once more in America.

"I remained there for two years, and you heard me sing at Chicago; then the Peraan sent me word that Adolphe Léon had been sent to the *travelling forces* at Toulon for twenty years for robbery and forgery, and I a few days later started for England, feeling I was safe. You know nearly all the rest," she goes on, sadly. "I worked on at the weary round of rehearsals and concerts unflinchingly, knowing that it meant daily bread to me, for I had not a friend in the world, save the Peraan, and they were too poor in their old age to be left without help; so I worked for them as well as myself, with never a ray of sunshine to brighten my dreary life till you came, and I saw you at Colthorp.

"I feared and yet hoped you loved me, that day we stood and gazed out over the surging waters—feared for you, hoped for myself. Don't think me a bad, weak, wicked woman," she implores, tearfully, clasping her hands.

"I heard some months before I saw you that Léon had been shot trying to escape from Toulon, but I took no steps to ascertain if it were true or not; only when you pleaded so hard to see me again I felt that I must send over to France and learn all particulars. I was assured that he had been shot dead with some others while trying to escape. They were wrong; he lived and another was buried in his place. Had I known this, had I dreamed that he lived, I would never have wronged you by marrying you. But I was innocent of any intended wickedness, Noel—you will believe that—and—forgive me?"

#### CHAPTER IX.

The Earl looks down at the fair face raised so pleadingly to his own. He has taken her back to his arms; she lies in their safe haven, her magnificent hair streams across his breast

in all its golden splendour, her trembling hands clasp his.

The tears glistened on her thick lashes; he does not speak, partly because he is almost speechless from joy at finding she is innocent, and partly because it is so sweet to this man, who is still a lover, to hear the woman he adores plead in her low, soft tones for his pity and pardon.

"I tried so hard," she goes on, in her pathetic voice, finding he remains silent; "to be stern and cold to you, for your sake. I knew a woman who had sung in public, who had a shameful secret in her life, was not a fitting bride for you, one of England's proudest peers; but I could not resist your pleading. I was weak as water, where I should have been strong as steel. I could not take my happiness and trust it out of my life with my own hands. Had you left me at Colthorp, and never sought me after, I would have borne it in silence; but when you came to me again, after an absence of two months, I realised what my feelings towards you were—realised what every hope of the future, every joy of the present, depended upon you, and you alone—that your love was more to me than anything else in the world. With you I knew my life would be a Paradise—without you a lonely wilderness. I was selfish; I thought only of my own happiness, forgot what I ought to have remembered. Your affection was so much to me, all that made life worth living, more than crown or kingdom; yet my selfishness has gained its rightful reward," she says, with a touch of bitterness, "for I have lost both, and shall leave you poorer than I came to you. I ought to have told you my secret; but I was a miserable coward, and feared that it might part us, and you was so noble and generous, you would not ask me one question that would make me think you doubted me. I must leave you, Noel—my dearest—my best beloved,"—she continues, sobbing bitterly, great tears rolling down her pallid cheeks—"a few days at most, and I shall be as distant from all I love and prize. Some other woman, more worthy of the honour, will bear your name, and take the place which was never rightly mine. But, oh, Noel! before you leave me, before we part for ever, say that you pardon me. Forgive the wretched woman whose sin was the outcome of her great, unconquerable love for you," and rising she flings herself at his feet, and clasps his knees with her hands, looking up at the blonde handsome face so dear to her through a mist of blinding tears.

"Forgive me—in pity forgive?"

"Forgive you, my dearest?" he says at last, his voice thick with emotion, "forgive you? there is nothing to forgive. My poor darling, you were more sinned against than sinning. I shall devote the rest of my life to making you forget these early sorrows."

"And you will not send me away from you?" she asks, half incredulously, looking up into the violet eyes, that gazed at her with such a world of love in their soft depths.

"Send you away? Certainly not. I shall keep you with me always," and he lifts her from her kneeling posture, and presses her close to him.

"But—Noel—!"

"Well!"

"I—I am not—not—"

"Not what?" she asks.

"Your wife," she murmurs, hiding her face on his breast.

"No, but you soon will be," he rejoins.

"How?" she falters, still keeping her face hidden.

"Because I shall marry you again as soon as possible—in a few days at most. A special license will smooth the way. For though your marriage, according to the laws of France, was not legal, as your father did not actually give his consent, still it would have held good in this country: so there must be another wedding between you and me."

"Yes!"

"We, of course, must be cautious, to avoid arousing suspicion, because your position in



society would be lost for ever if this were suspected, and Lady Silver knows something."

"Yes, Noel, and I dread her. She will never forgive you for not making her mistress of Marindin Royal, and she is jealous of me. Her jealousy will do some harm."

"I hardly think so, dearest. They are too dependent on my bounty; she dare not offend me."

"Pray Heaven she may not wreak her spite on me."

"She will not, my love. I will settle all scores with her. Her power lay in the fact of knowing that you had a secret from me—now that is over all is clear and cloudless between us. I will make some plausible excuse to her about the conservatory affair, and she shall not see Léon's body, so will not know that it was he who broke into the house last night. And now no more tears or misgivings. I must see those pale cheeks rosy again. Put your arms round my neck and tell me you love me."

"You know I do, husband," she replies, tenderly, obeying his orders, the old familiar term slipping out. "I love you better than anything else in the whole world."

"My beloved!" and clamping her once more to his heart he showers down kisses on cheek, lip, and brow, till she glows again with new life and beauty.

A week later all the guests have left the Royal, and the Earl and Marian go up to town, ostensibly on business connected with the estate, and take none of the servants with them, not even the discreet French maid, which causes some slight astonishment among the numerous members of Noel Tenterville's household.

"You can manage, I suppose, for two or three days without your maid?" he had asked her.

And she answered—

"Yes, I never had one in the old days."

So alone they go up to the great metropolis, and stay at a quiet hotel near the Strand.

One morning, some hour or so after breakfast, Noel is writing letters, and Marian looking out into the busy street. Suddenly she comes and lays her hands on his shoulders.

"Noel," she says, "I am going to ask you a favour."

"A thousand, darling, if you wish it."

"Nay," she answers, smiling, "one at a time will be enough. I should dearly like to run out and do a little shopping while you are finishing those horrid letters. No one will recognise me."

"But, Marian, you know nothing of London, and—"

"Yes, I do, more than you imagine. I have often lived here when poor papa was alive; he was fond of bringing me over, because I understood and spoke English perfectly."

"Very well, my love, I suppose I must give way. Mind you return in time for luncheon."

She kisses her thanks and hurried away.

Noel finishes his letters, sends them off, looks at his watch, then out of the window, yawns, and finally lights up a cigar, and becomes absorbed in the columns of the Times.

An hour passed in this occupation, when, once more examining his watch, jumps up, and, hurrying to the window, looks eagerly up and down the street, but there is no sign of Marian.

He paces the room a little while, then sits down to the paper again, flings it aside after a bit, lights a fresh cigar, and, taking up a novel, consoles himself as best he may.

But the time slips away, and still no Marian. He grows restless, then impatient, finally—as the time for luncheon passes and nothing is to be seen of her—alarmed. He must go in search of her, though he knows the chances are sadly against his meeting her.

A thousand terrible conjectures flit through his brain, and, unable to bear the suspense any longer, he rushes into the hall, and, snatching up in his excitement the round

hat of a distinguished artist staying at the hotel instead of his own irreproachable Lincoln and Bennett, leaves word he shall not be very long, and hurries up the wide street.

He turns the corner, and soon finds himself in the Strand.

He had not got a dozen yards before he almost runs into the arms of Marian, who is looking behind her. As she turns and sees who it is a cry of joy escapes her lips.

"Oh, Noel—Noel! I am so glad it is you. That horrible man!"

"What horrible man?" asked the Earl.

"Have you been annoyed? If so—"

"Never mind, it is all over; now I have met you I feel safe once more."

But he presses her, and she tells him that, having finished her purchases, she had strolled on to the Embankment, and thinking that there might be a nearer way than to go all round to Charing Cross again she had asked an elderly man, with the dress and appearance of a gentleman, if he could direct her. He had promptly volunteered to do so, and had brought her safely into the right side of the Strand.

Having done this, however, his manner immediately changed, and he had made some coarse and familiar remark as to her beauty. She had immediately run straight away up the street, looking back every now and then, but he had not had the audacity to follow her.

"I wish I had caught him," Noel says, viciously; "but it will be a lesson to me not to allow you to go out again unattended in the streets of London. They are not used to seeing such pearls."

The Earl obtains a special licence; and one morning these two, who have lived together as man and wife for nearly a year, go out and drive to a dingy, time-worn church in the heart of the busy city of London, and kneeling once more before God's altar they plight their faith and are made one—this time with never a shade of sorrow or sin between them, nothing save a great trusting love on either side, which can end only with their lives.

They go back to the Royal for a short time, and then Lord Marindin takes his wife abroad, giving out that the extremely severe winter is trying her delicate constitution too much, and that the doctors have ordered her to the sunny south, an arrangement which suits the Duchess of Palliser and her daughter extremely well, as they, with Noel's permission, take up their abode at the Castle and hold high revel there, in the absence of its lawful lord.

And Noel and his wife enjoy the languid life of southern climes, self-exiled from the stern, cold skies of England, its chilly blasts, whitened fields, and frozen lakes; they wander like a pair of lotus-eaters through the Hesperides, along the shores of the Riviera, and amid the violet-filled fields of Monaco and the orange groves of Tangier spend another honeymoon, and learn to forget some of the horrors, fears, and doubts that have hitherto darkened and clouded their happiness.

Six months have passed. Once more the fields and woods and hills around Marindin Royal are green and bright with the "August gold of earth." The corn waves in the valleys, the poppies flaunt their scarlet heads aloft, the moors are purple with heather, the gorge gay with its yellow flowers, the bracken in the hollows grows tall and stiff, the oaks are getting loaded with acorns, the whortleberry bushes are thick, the honey-suckle plentiful; all nature shows that mid-summer is over and russet-garbed autumn at hand.

The sun is setting in great glory behind the wooded hills, and bars of rosy and purple cloud stretch out far across the sky. The herons are sailing out to feed, uttering loud "craaks," and the rooks, who are coming slowly home to roost in the olden trees, around the castle are startled by the loud peal of the joy-bells—bells that ring out in honour of the christening of the heir of Marindin

Royal, a young gentleman some six weeks' old, who lies in a blue satin, lace-trimmed cradle, clenching his little dimpled fists and rolling restlessly from side to side his round, pink poll, guiltless of all covering, save a soft yellow down.

Perhaps the tiny despot, Lord Noel Bertram Tenterville, objects to the numerous people who come and peer curiously at him as he lies among his filmy laces and soft-hued satins; at any rate, his wee face puckers up curiously, and a low baby wail strikes on Marian's ear as she stands talking to her grace of Elmhirst, who of late has been wonderfully gracious, and has actually asked to be allowed to be godmother to the little lordling.

"Excuse me," cries the Countess, instantly, "I hear my baby crying;" and in a minute she is by the dainty cradle, and in another has the small atom in her arms, pressed against her bosom, this wondrous mother-love some women feel shining in her dark eyes, lighting up all her face with a richer, fuller beauty.

"What is the matter with the tyrant?" asks the Earl, laughing.

"Tyrant! How dare you call him that, sir?" rejoins Marian, with a smile. "He is the dearest little fellow in the world."

"That may be according to your way of thinking. Still, he is a tyrant, and you can't deny it. How you flew just now when you heard his majesty's voice."

"Of course. My wee man is tired. I must send for nurse."

"Do you mean to say that you will actually let him go out of your sight?"

"I suppose I must," she answers, with a sigh.

"Must what?" asks Ada—Ada Clissold now—who has been bidden with the others to the naming of the heir.

"Send my boy to bed."

"Is he getting tired?"

"Yes."

"Clissold," cries Lord Marindin, jestingly, "beware how you set up a family. My wife used to love me. I was first with her, now I am a nobody. My place is taken by that little hairless atom, that I have half a mind to strangle."

"Well, I never intend to let my place in Ada's heart be usurped by any hairless atom," rejoins the linesman, entering into the spirit of the thing. "If she has a child, and she seems too fond of it, I shall take it away immediately and put it out to nurse, like they used to do in Ireland, with strict orders that it is to be fed on nothing but tinned milk."

"Roland, how can you?" cries his young bride, blushing rosy, and giving him a tap with her hand.

"A very good idea," remarks the Earl. "Marian, if you don't return at once to your old allegiance I will dispose of my rival as Clissold suggested."

"I have never swerved from it," she answers, softly. "You are still, as you have always been, my dearest and best-beloved."

And husband and wife look at each other with infinite tenderness, infinite love in their eyes; and Lady Silver, seeing the look, secretly congratulates herself that she has had the sense at last to say "yes" to the Duke of Paulton's suit, and bless him with her fair hand and honour him by spending his vast fortune and establishing herself as mistress of Paulton Chase and the broad lands that lie round it, for she knows now that there can be no secret between them—no cloud. Whatever the mystery of the man she had seen Lady Marindin speaking to in the outer conservatory on the eve of Christmas it must have been explained, and satisfactorily explained, to Noel. Once or twice, with hardly veiled spite and malice, she has approached the subject with him, but he has silenced her with a sternness and determination that has awed even her almost unabashed insolence and daring; and fearing to lose the good gifts that lie in his power, and having not a shred of proof with which to substantiate her story, she

has deemed it good policy to keep silent and be civil and courteous to her cousin's much-hated wife.

Still, as she looks at Noel Tenterville, tall, handsome, manly, all a woman could wish, with his violet eyes and sunny hair, and then at the man beside her, whose wife she is pledged to become, a sigh escapes her lips, and she inwardly rails against the bad fortune that has given her for a spouse a man more than double her age, bald, red-faced, undersized, and pudgy, and desperately—inconveniently so—in love with her.

"My last chance gone," she mutters to herself, as she sees her cousin and the Duchess of Elmhist chatting amicably together. "I can never manage to ostracise Marian from the cream of the county people now that her Grace has gone over to the enemy and taken her up so warmly. But I shall hate her, hate her as long as I live," and the cold eyes snap like flints, and the thin lips curve with a bitter sneer; and the Duke of Faulton, as he notes it, quakes inwardly somewhat, and thinks he will have to give Silver her head when she is his wife, and use neither whip nor spur.

"Your wife is looking very lovely," the Duchess is saying, with her suave smile.

"Does your Grace think so?" answers Noel.

"Yes. As I told you before, I admire her immensely. Her style is not quite English though. Is it?"

"No. She is partly French and partly Norwegian, as well as English."

"That accounts for her graceful bearing. But, my dear Lord Marindin," goes on the great leader of fashion, with delicate curiosity, "you have never told me who she was."

"Have I not?" he answers, lightly.

"No. She must have come of some good old family, she looks thoroughbred."

"She did. Marian is the only child of the last Comte de Bormis."

"Indeed! Then her ancestors date back nearly as far as your own?"

"Farther, I believe."

"Do you know," continues her Grace of Elmhist, "that I think you are a most fortunate man. You can hardly have an ungratified wish or an unfulfilled desire."

"You are right, I have not," and the Earl, as he speaks, raises his head and looks towards Marian, who still holds his child pressed to her bosom; and meeting her eyes, radiant and love-lit, he feels that his happiness is complete, and that fate can have no more good gifts to bestow on him.

[THE END.]

## "PAYING FOR HIS MISTAKE."

I AM spending the summer at one of the pleasantest and most romantic spots which can be imagined to exist in Derbyshire. It adds the charm of the quaintness of an elder generation to the sprightliness and civilisation of the present one. Under the hospitable roof which shelters me there is a dear old lady—my friend Elva's grandmother—who knows all the families for miles around, and can tell me many an interesting tale of the days before Elva was born.

This morning cards came for a country wedding, and set the whole family into a ripple of excited expectation. For an affair like this now upon the tapis is no more like one of the stiff, formal London weddings than a cluster of grapes picked while the dew is still on them is like the bunch of raisins which also once was nursed by the sun and showers as it hung upon the parent vine.

The young couple who are to be married are named respectively, Grace Vandeleur and Herbert Faunthorpe, and they are called the handsomest of the several engaged pairs in the neighbourhood.

Grace lives in the finest place for miles

around. It is a large imposing-looking house, and has a lawn at its right roomy enough to accommodate the young folk in the various amusements which have become popular among them of late. Lawn tennis, and a target for archery practice, each has its place as well as its votaries among the members of the large family of brothers and sisters which is now to invade it, by chance, for the first time since little Eva—Grace's youngest sister—has reached her teens. At the left of the house, a flower-garden occupies a large space, laid out in the mathematical squares and triangles which characterized the arrangement of flower-beds in old-fashioned times, and which Mr. Vandeleur will not suffer to be altered, in memory of his mother, who had superintended its laying out when she had come a bride to her new home. In front a fountain throws up its sparkling spray from a huge velvety oval of close-shaven grass, around which circles the gravelled sweep which leads to the entrance.

I had seen Grace Vandeleur at church the day before, and had been so struck by her fresh young beauty as to "rave" about it on my return, according to Cousin Elva, though if that be "raving" what can the genuine article be?

Elva's grandma was sitting beside me when the invitations were brought in. I had expressed a laudable ambition of which grandma approves cordially. It was to learn to knit. And as I am to be her pet grandson's wife, it pleases the dear old lady that her Frank stands a chance of still being made comfortable with the work of loving hands when her own shall be folded in their last rest. She doesn't know that I have the key to the pleasure which made her brown eyes brighten into a semblance of their girlish fire when she first heard the "school-marm" (myself) broach such a sensible desire. But grandma's sweet, old face is like an open book to me whereon all beautiful thoughts are legibly written. So I know her little secret.

She listens thoughtfully as Elva opens one of the cream-white envelopes and reads its contents aloud.

"Strange, isn't it, daughter," she says, turning to Elva's mother, "that Howard St. Aubyn's last remaining child is to be buried the day of Grace Vandeleur's wedding feast. If ever a man has received his punishment in this world it is he."

I had heard of the death of Amy St. Aubyn in the foreign land to which her father had gone with her in search of health, and knew that the steamer was even now bearing her inanimate body back to her native shores; but beyond that I had heard nothing of the St. Aubyn family history. But from what grandma said I drew the inference that something interesting lay behind her words, and I made a mental note of them, intending to get at their meaning the first time I had her all to myself.

In the excitement of getting ready for such an important event as a wedding at Vandeleur Hall I forgot to speak of Mr. St. Aubyn during the days which intervened between the reception of the invitations and the time appointed for the ceremony.

Then it was brought back to my mind with a shock; for, just as the bridal pair had entered the carriage which was to convey them away—while the laughing bevy of bridesmaids stood upon the broad terrace to shower rice and good wishes upon the young couple, and as stately Mrs. Vandeleur, who, although mother of the bride, looked handsome and youthful enough to be her sister, was standing beside her husband gazing wistfully at the child who henceforth must give the first place in her heart to another—a cable funeral train passed slowly by; and as the carriage, containing one solitary mourner—the dead girl's father—reached a spot just opposite the happy group, the closely drawn curtains yielded to a sudden gust of wind and were blown back, disclosing for an instant the childless widower's dark, grief-stricken face.

Unconsciously he raised his eyes, and, as they rested on Mrs. Vandeleur's face, she in turn looked at him, her velvety cheeks paling suddenly, as though she had seen a spectre instead of a man as rich in the honours of the world as he was singularly poverty-stricken in all that makes life truly happy; for he was now alone—wifeless and childless amid the ruins of his happiness.

As the carriage passed Mr. Vandeleur drew nearer to his wife and put his arm with lover-like tenderness about her, and as she looked up into her face I saw that tears were in her eyes.

"Howard has paid dearly for his mistake, Grace; but do not let it cast a shadow over us to-day."

Mrs. Vandeleur tried to smile.

"It seems so dreadful, Edward. Had his children lived he would have had as many as we have. And to look about upon our fine, strong boys, and at Grace and Eva, and to think of having not one single one left! It is heart-breaking!"

"I knew Howard St. Aubyn would be punished, it was inevitable. But come, your guests will think we are following Grace and Herbert's example, and are making love to each other. We must attend better to our social duties, Mrs. Vandeleur," and, with a smile that spoke volumes, he left his wife's side, and moved again among the merry groups scattered about.

"Grandma, why does everyone say that Mr. St. Aubyn's misfortunes are a punishment?" I asked that evening.

"Howard St. Aubyn was once engaged to Grace Vandeleur's mother. She was then Grace Fane, and was the pride of the village on account of her beauty and goodness. But she was not rich in this world's goods, and when a wealthy old man died and left all his property to an only daughter, Howard broke his engagement with Grace to marry the heiress.

"Grace's mortification and disappointment worked together to throw her into a brain fever, and she nearly died, rising from her sick bed the pale shadow of what she had been.

"Doctor Vandeleur, then a rising young physician, was her doctor, and he fell in love with her. But it was a long time before she would listen to him, though at last his faithful devotion was rewarded, first by her gratitude, then by her liking. I don't think it was her love at first, but Doctor Vandeleur was glad to win her for his wife and trust to the future to bring her into the full reciprocation of his affection.

"He was repaid. For I never saw a happier couple than they are now, and have been for years.

"There was a clause in the old Mr. Martin's will that if his daughter left no children, all his property should revert to the benefit of his native place.

"Strange to say the number of children which were born to her were five—just the same with Grace's. But they were puny from birth, and only Amy lived to grow to maturity. As you know, it was her funeral which passed by on Grace's Vandeleur's wedding-day. So the riches which caused Howard St. Aubyn to marry a girl he did not love, and almost break the heart of the one whom he really cared for—as much as such a selfish man could—will all revert to the village. It was mercenary match, and now he has lost even the money for which he bartered his happiness. Don't you see, child? That is his punishment, and almost every one feels that it is a just one. What do you think about it?"

I went into a brown study for a few minutes, out of which grandma's voice aroused me.

"What makes you look so sober, dear?"

"I was thinking how sad it is that the innocent must suffer for the guilty. Poor little Amy St. Aubyn! So young, and with so many



hopes clustering about her life, and yet she was sacrificed for her father's sin."

"That is according to the Bible, child."

"Grandma," I said, impulsively, "for the first time in my life I feel glad that I am not rich. For who knows what other inheritance might have accompanied the money?"

Grandma took off her spectacles and looked at me with a benignant smile.

"Don't go on the opposite extreme, dear. Riches do very well in their place, only don't put them first. It is the abuse of this world's good things, not their proper use, that does harm."

And I suppose grandma is right in that conclusion, as she is in everything else.

M. E. M.

## KILBY'S INHERITANCE.

"Well, I'm mighty glad to get home!" said Mr. Kilby, emphatically.

And he climbed out of the trap, with a beaming face, and hurried up the front path; while the man, who had driven him home from the station, turned into the lane with a flourish.

Anybody might have been glad to get back to so cozy a home and to so unmistakable a welcome.

A big dog came bounding round the corner of the house to meet him, prancing round him excitedly and making frantic attempts to lick his face.

Mrs. Jessop, the housekeeper—Mr. Kilby was a hopeless bachelor—paused in her preparations for tea to smile and nod from the window; and two young people, who were standing by the front door, jumped up hastily, took charge of Mr. Kilby's portmanteau, and dragged a chair out on to the lawn and pressed him into it.

These were Mr. Kilby's lodgers, Patty Thorn, who had come from the next county to teach the village school; and Arthur Weston, who was surveying for the new railway and buying land therefor.

It was whispered that most of the surveying had been done in the neighbourhood of the schoolhouse, the children bearing witness to the fact that the young surveyor was a very frequent visitor, and that hardly a day passed that he was not on hand to walk home with the schoolmistress.

"Well," said Mr. Kilby, removing his travel-stained hat and wiping his forehead.

And he stopped short, and appeared to fall into a reverie.

His companions were silent. They were not quite sure which would be the more appropriate, sympathy or congratulation.

Mr. Kilby had been to a point several miles distant, to receive the money left him by a brother.

"He was worth more than anybody thought," said Mr. Kilby at last, abruptly. "He left Mary and the boys more than they can ever use up if they try; and he left me twelve hundred pounds."

The surveyor and the little schoolmistress looked at each other breathlessly.

To them, working hard for their modest earnings, and more than appreciating the value of money, it seemed an overwhelming amount.

"I've got it here," Mr. Kilby continued, tapping his breast-pocket, "and it's worried me all the way home. You see, I don't know what in the name of goodness to do with it."

"That's the last thing that would trouble me," said Arthur, briskly; and Patty laughed, as she always did at Arthur's sallies.

"There's the bank," Mr. Kilby went on, musingly, "but I'm afraid of banks. And there's the railways; I suppose I might take stock in some of them. But I ain't partial to railways, either. I suppose I'd better keep it by me till I've looked round a little," he concluded, rubbing his chin, disturbedly.

"Where will you keep it?" said Patty wonderingly.

"Well, I've been thinking about that," Mr. Kilby responded, looking at the ground with contracted brows. "I thought of the back of the old settee, and the inside of the straw-tick, and the clock-case; but I've come to the conclusion that they'd be the first places anybody'd look. Finally I thought of the very thing. There's a loose board up in the floor of my room—the north-west corner—just room for a box under it. I can put my trunk over it, and there it is. Nobody'd think of going there."

"Nobody but me," said Arthur, cheerfully. "I should know exactly where to go."

At which Patty laughed again, and Mr. Kilby smiled absently.

He was very fond of his boarders; he often wondered how he could have thought the old house cheerful before they came, and what he should do when they were gone.

"I'd better get it off my mind," he said, rising. "I'll go and do it now."

And he went into the wide hall and up the stairs.

"He ought to invest it at once," said Arthur, disapprovingly. "He'll always be uneasy while he has it on his hands."

"I am afraid so," said Patty, looking after him regretfully.

And then the conversation drifted to less practical subjects than that of Mr. Kilby's money, and was carried on in rather a lower tone.

It was of Mr. Kilby's money that Patty was thinking, however, as she sat in her window that night, looking down the sleeping road and listening to the chirp of a belated cricket.

She had heard a slight jarring sound from the next room—her host's; and her thoughts had flown immediately to the loose board and Mr. Kilby's inheritance.

She sat motionless, with startled face, listening intently.

A soft step crept down the stairs—she heard it plainly; and the front door opened with a creak.

Patty felt her heart beating fast and her hands trembling; but she rose to her feet and leaned far out of the window, straining her eyes.

A tall form stepped softly to the ground and made its way through the yard with a careful, stealthy movement.

But at sight of it Patty gave a sigh of relief and laughed softly to herself.

She stood watching the proceedings of the ghostly figure until it turned and came toward the house—until the front door closed softly, and the stairs creaked under an ascending tread.

Curiosity, perplexity, and amazement had filled her face in turn, to be followed by regretful pity.

"Poor man!" she said to herself, compassionately. "It will worry him into his grave, at this rate."

School closed a week or so later for a fortnight's holiday; and the surveyor drove Patty to the station—she was to go home for the holidays.

These two had come to an understanding. Patty wore a ring on the proper finger, and all their conversation of late had been upon one subject—which was, upon how little a young couple of extremely modest wants could safely start out together.

They had not yet succeeded in bringing the probable amount within the narrow limits of Arthur's salary, although their feats in this direction had been marvellous; but they had not dreamed of losing courage.

"I shall begin making all sorts of things as soon as I get home," said Patty, cheerfully, as the train came rumbling in. "Dear me! what will mother say?"

She shook her handkerchief from the window as the train moved off, and leaned forward to catch Arthur's parting words:

"I'll be here to meet you, of course."

With that assurance still in her ears, it was no wonder that, when she got out of the train, two weeks later, and looked round with an eager smile, the sight of the deserted little station should have filled her with something like dread.

Nobody was in sight except the station-master, and he was in his office busy over some accounts, which rather seemed to bother him.

Patty walked to the edge of the platform, and looked anxiously up and down the road. There was a cloud of dust in the distance, and she watched it with a lightened heart.

But the waggon which lumbered up slowly and stopped before her was not Mr. Kilby's; nor was the tall young countryman who stepped out awkwardly the person she had hoped to see. She recognised him as a neighbour of Mr. Kilby, and her fears returned.

"Going down to Kilby's, ain't you?" said the young man, hesitatingly. "Want to ride? I can take you down as well as not."

Patty climbed into the waggon silently. Why had Arthur not come. Something must be wrong.

"Heard about that surveyor-fellow?" her companion observed, as they drove away, and he looked at her sympathetically.

"About what?" said Patty, clutching the edge of her high seat, tremblingly.

"It was broke up only a day or so back," said the young man, obviously divided between pity for her distress and his enjoyment of telling a startling story. "Kilby went to mill that day, and the surveyor he went out to Barford. He said he wanted to telegraph to the railway company about something or other. Well, when Kilby got back—you know he had a lot of money willed to him lately?—well, he got to thinking about that money, and he went to see if it was all right. He kept it up in his room, under the floor, with a trunk over it. Well, the money was gone! The trunk was just as he'd left it, but the money wasn't there."

He paused to note the effect of this announcement, and stared at his companion in astonishment.

For there was something like amusement in her face.

"Well," she said, calmly. "What did he do?"

"He told the neighbours about it. If you'll believe it, he hadn't thought of suspecting anybody of taking it; he always was good-natured. He thought it must have been rats that carried it off. But he thought right away of that surveyor, and when we found out that Kilby had been simple enough to tell him where he kept it, we was pretty sure it was him that took it. So we went out to Barford—two or three of us—and got out a warrant and arrested him. We didn't expect to find the money on him, of course; and it wasn't. But there ain't a doubt but what he's got it somewhere. Anyhow, he's before the magistrates, out to Barford, and the chances are all against him. We are pretty sharp on this way," he concluded, with an air of satisfaction.

Truly, this little schoolmistress was a strange person. The amusement had died out of her face, and a profound indignation had filled it.

She grasped his arm eagerly.

"He did not take it!" she said, scornfully. "I know where it is this minute. You must drive me out to Barford immediately!"

She snatched the whip from its socket as she spoke and touched the horses lightly.

The not very large room where the Barford magistrates held their sittings was filled to overflowing. The trial, coming as it did into the midst of the sleepy summer days, when excitements were few, had proved a great attraction.

It was an exceptional trial, too. The prosecutor had been unwilling to prosecute, and had seemed troubled ever since at having been led into doing so. The prisoner was

the most honest-looking of young men, and behaved remarkably, as an innocent person would have done, and the evidence against him was very slight, and purely circumstantial. But in spite of these confusing facts, the vast majority believed in his guilt, though rather against their wills—he was such a frank-looking fellow.

Mr. Kilby was sitting with downcast eyes and a troubled expression. Arthur stood in the dock looking weary and hopeless, although at the same time fearless, and the prosecutor's advocate was demanding of the magistrates why, if the prisoner had not taken the money, he had come to Barford upon the day of the robbery upon an obviously trumped-up charge? Clearly, he had come to place the money in safe hands; his accomplice was probably in their midst.

The door opened suddenly and forcibly, and a young girl, with a flushed and eager face, came hastily in. At the sight of her Arthur raised his head, and his face brightened.

She gave him a swift smile, reminiscent of the astonished observers, and made her way to Mr. Kilby's side.

"You buried it yourself, under the apple-tree!" she cried, grasping his coat-front, and shaking him a little in her eagerness. "I saw you! You were walking in your sleep, of course; but I didn't know it then. You came down the night you came home with it and dug a place under the apple tree, and put it in."

Look Mr. Kilby started at her in bewilderment; the spectators looked at each other; the prosecutor's lawyer looked disgusted.

There was a solemn pause, which the latter gentleman broke by demanding testily, that the evidence of "this person" be taken in the proper way.

But nobody seemed to hear him. "I used to," said Mr. Kilby at last, slowly—"I used to walk in my sleep every night regular, and do queer enough things. But I did think I'd got over it."

Somebody in a corner of the room clapped a timid pair of hands, and the next instant the room resounded with the cheers of a delighted crowd, which was, however, immediately suppressed.

How a couple of constables and an officer of the court were appointed by the magistrates to go and prove the young lady's remarkable statement; how they returned in triumph, and presented Mr. Kilby with a small box of delicately modest appearance, and the enthusiastic cheers of the spectators; how, for a confused period, everybody appeared to be congratulating everybody else; and how Mr. Kilby drove home in state with the surveyor and the little schoolmistress on either side of him, and relief and happiness beaming from his good-humoured face—these were the chief topics in Barford for a week, after which Mr. Kilby's money was forgotten.

But Arthur and Patty had substantial reasons for remembering it.

It was Mr. Kilby's money that smoothed the way to their marriage a few months later, and that built the snug little house they called home.

E. A. O.

## FACETIE.

A TRAVELLING MAN.—A Wandering Jew.

Young ladies who play tennis are known as "maiden all for lawn" (all for lawn).

In spite of its usefulness, with some men, gold is really a nice ore (eye sore).

A REMIND AT A PINCH.—One who shares his snuff-box with you.

A METEOROLOGICAL QUESTION.—How is it that there is no place where there is so apt to be a fresh breeze as by the salt sea?

THE MAXIM.—"Take when the iron is hot," is getting altogether too slow for the age; you must make it hot by striking.

THE HEAD CLERK.—A phrenologist's assistant.

THE ROAD TO ECONOMY is a prudent buy-way.

EVERY word of a humorous writing should be correct, if it is funny graphically reported.

WHY is a man with a cold in his head like a waterfall? Because he is naturally soaked.

MORRIS, young ladies are very fond of reflection—in the looking-glass.

WHY is it proverbial that parrots have the strongest indurment to be honest? Because honesty is the best POUT-see.

RAILWAYS are like laundresses—they have ironed the whole country, and occasionally do a little mangling.

THE Nihilists find it difficult to get at the Czar. He is never at home. He is always a Reminoff.

AN irritable customer who bargains much, but buys little, is productive of constant irritation.

There is said to be a dull campaign, creating but little enthusiasm among business men. Yet it cannot be said that the banks do not take any interest.

BETTER HALF.—"Won't you take half of this poor apple?" said a pretty damsel. "No, I thank you. I would prefer a better half." Eliza blushed, and referred the young man to her papa.

BRANDISHING INSINUATION.—A lady disagreeing once with a literary gentleman, the dispute became very warm, and many high words were exchanged with great acrimony. "How now," said a mutual friend, stepping between them: "can it be that you two have been clandestinely married?"

STRICT ORDERS.—A jailer had received strict orders not to keep any prisoners in solitary confinement. Once, when he had but two in charge, one escaped, and he was obliged in consequence to let the other go also in order to comply with the regulation.

A VALID REASON.—"Phil, my jewel," said Pat, "I'm mighty sorry you can't dine with me to-day." "Arrah, and why can't I dine with you?" said the astonished Phil. "Because, my dear," returned Pat, "I haven't asked you as yet."

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE.—Dobbs thinks the "tree of knowledge" was the birch tree, the twigs of which have done more to make man acquainted with arithmetic than all the other members of the vegetable kingdom combined.

A YOUNG Frenchman, who had sown a heavy crop of wild oats, determined to get married and settle down. On the wedding-day his mother-in-law said to him, "I do hope, my dear son-in-law, that you will be guilty of no more follies in future." "My dear madam," he replied, "I promise you that this will be the last!"

A KEEN REMARK.—"It is a great pity that you come dangling at my heels, Mr. Non-entail," said a consequential lady to her sentimental admirer. "You remind me of a thermometer that is filled with nothing in the upper story." "Most amiable of your sex," said he, "for so flattering a compliment, let me remind you that you occupy my upper story entirely."

SKILFUL PAINTING.—"Look here, ma!" said a young lady, just commencing to take lessons in painting, holding up a sample of her skill to her mother. "See my painting! Can you tell me what this is?" Ma, after looking at it some time, answered: "Well, I suppose it's an eye or an oyster; but I don't know which."

"AIN'T you almost boiled?" inquired a little girl of a gentleman calling on her father and mother. "No, little one, I can't say that I am. On the contrary, I feel quite comfortable." "That's funny. I should think you would be." "Why so, Daisy?" "Oh, because I heard mamma say that your wife kept you in hot water all the time."

"But pa," said with much daughter, "why do you object to my marrying Henry, simply because he is a bank cashier?" "Because, my daughter, your fangs are too delicate to stand the rigours of an American winter."

"What's all this I hear about Mother Hubbard's? What are they, anyway?" "Oh, they're dresses that are not pleasing to some fastidious people. They seem to be afraid of them." "Have you ever seen anything in them to be afraid of?" "Yes; my wife!"

At a meeting of some Sunday-school teachers, one gentleman, who stated that he had been eastward with his "apprentice," was interrupted by a brother clergyman, who asked if he meant his wife.

"Yes," remarked Fenderson, "I was pretty hard pressed for money for a while, but I am now on my feet again." "Are you?" replied Fogg, glancing at Fenderson's rumpled elbows. "You are lucky. Nothing, I should say, could overthrow you."

Mrs. JACK OWEN, who is somewhat of a donkey in his way, had been particularly pert the other evening. Finally, he said something to Mrs. Sharpe that was just too much for anything. "Why don't you box his ears?" asked one of the girls. "I would," replied Mrs. Sharpe, "only I don't know where I could find a box big enough." Mr. Jack Owen felt as though he had been stung in his own mortar.

MISS FLORA B.—is an awful flirt, and what makes the ladies most against her is, that all the married men seem to be so fond of her society. The other day Mrs. M.—said, quite seriously, "Really, my dear, don't you think it almost time you took a husband?" "Whose shall I take?" asked Flora, with a sweet smile. "I wish you had been there to have seen Mrs. M.—a face! It was a picture."

A QUAKER having bought a horse which proved unsound of a gentleman named Bacon, he wrote to inform him of it, but received no answer. Shortly after, meeting the seller, he requested him to take back the horse, which the other positively refused to do. Finding his remonstrances of no avail, the Quaker calmly said, "Friend, thou hast doubtless heard of Satan entering the herd of swine, and I find that he didst stoop fast to the Bacon. Good-morning to thee, friend."

THERE is a young lady who lives next door to Blogg's house, and while Blogg had company, the other evening, she was heard in her endeavours to extort music from a piano. "Our neighbour's daughter is a very good player," remarked Blogg, affably, during a pause in the conversation. "Her time is a little slow," was the critical response of Blogg's caller, who happened to be a connoisseur in music. "Yes," said Blogg, "her young man is there, and very likely she has set the clock back."

At a family party a young prodigy was executing on the piano a symphony, more military than pastoral. Parents and friends were in ecstasies. "Isn't it beautiful!" exclaimed an old aunt, speaking to the neighbour from next door, who had joined the party. "What splendid execution! You seem to hear the sound of the soldiers' footsteps dying away in the distance." "Ah," said the neighbour, "if they would only take the piano with them!"

"I TELL you what," airily exclaimed Perkins, as he sat down to the supper table, "I was in a tight place this afternoon!" "Yes, I know you were," interrupted his wife, in clear, cold utterances that cut like a knife. "I saw you coming out of it!" And then it flashed across Perkins that he had incidentally stepped into a tavern with a friend for the purpose of examining a doubtful political statement with the aid of a magnifying glass, and his contemplated anecdote slipped from his grasp like money at a seaside resort, while the anger was finished amid a silence so profound that he could plainly hear a naphkin ring.



## SOCIETY.

Mr. GLADSTONE will ask Parliament during the present session for a grant of £15,000 per annum for the eldest son of the Prince of Wales.

H. R. H. PRINCESS CHRISTIAN OF SCHLESWIG HOLSTEIN and an aristocratic company met in Wellington Barracks Chapel on the 25th ult., on the occasion of the marriage of the Hon. Henry C. Legge, Adjutant of the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards, second son of the Earl and Countess of Dartmouth, with Hon. Amy Lambert, late maid of honour to the Queen, eldest daughter of Sir G. W. and Lady Fanny Lambert, of Beau-Parc, county Meath. It is the first wedding that has been solemnised in the chapel.

The chancel and communion table were beautifully decorated with white flowers, and the scene was a very imposing one, owing to the non-commissioned officers and men of the 1st Battalion of the Coldstream Guards lining the aisle, and the small galleries on each side of the chancel being filled with the band of the regiment and the soldiers' choir.

There were six bridesmaids, who awaited the coming of the bride at the chapel door. The bride entered the church with her father at half-past two precisely, and passed at once to the chancel steps, where a nuptial hymn was sung.

The elegant bridal gown was of white satin duchesse, having a long train, on which on the left side clusters of orange blossoms had the appearance of having fallen. The bodice and front of the skirt were handsomely trimmed with crystal embroidery and similar flowers.

At the Health Exhibition on Wednesday, October 30 (when the Princess Louise, Marchioness of Lorne, was amongst the visitors), there was a great gathering of the milking and baking trades, on in plainer terms a bread show. Some time ago a committee of exhibitors in the bread machinery department asked the editor of the *British and Foreign Cook* to invite leading bakers to send samples of their bread, and the response from various parts of the country was most encouraging. The whole of the chief processes connected with the making of bread were displayed.

Bread of various qualities was made by manual labour and by machinery, and baking in each variety of oven was carried on at intervals. Simultaneously the minor arts of cake-making and confectionery were prosecuted. The hall, generally used as a jury room, was for the day a depot for bread samples of all kinds. After the practical day's work, of twenty-one special engagements, a company of invited gentlemen dined with the principals of some of the chief firms of English and foreign millers, bakers, machinists, engineers, and yeast manufacturers. Sir Spencer Wells was in the chair.

Sir Moses Montefiore's one hundredth birthday has been celebrated. A special service of prayer and thanksgiving was held in all the Jewish synagogues of the British empire. Among those who attended at the synagogue of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews in Bevis Marks was Mrs. Rachel Prasano, a Jewish lady one hundred and three years of age. The anniversary was also celebrated with much impressiveness in every part of America. Besides the Jews, large numbers of Christians took part everywhere in the proceedings. In general psalms were read, and prayers in Hebrew and English, written for the occasion, were offered; while addresses, lectures, and orations were delivered by clergymen and laymen.

Sir Moses received during the day over eight hundred letters and six hundred telegrams of congratulation in all languages, and from all parts of the world, in addition to many other tokens of regard and esteem in the shape of beautifully illuminated addresses and choice bouquets of flowers.

## STATISTICS.

THE VOLUNTEER FORCE.—The twenty-fifth official year of the Volunteer force has been brought to a close, and, as soon as possible, the full returns of enrolled strength, efficient, &c., are due at the War Office. The last returns were the best in the history of the organization, showing 207,365 enrolled, 202,428 efficient, 17,928 proficient officers and sergeants, and 170,739 of all ranks present at inspection.

CLOSE OF THE HEALTH EXHIBITION.—When the entrance and exits of the Royal Horticultural Gardens closed at ten o'clock on Thursday, October 30th, the most successful exhibition ever held came to an end. In the six months, less eight days, during which it has been open to the public, the turnstiles have registered no fewer than 4,167,681 admissions—a number nearly equal to the whole population of the metropolis—men, women, and children. On an average there were about 27,000 visitors a day, but latterly nearly twice this number has been the rule, and during the last four days the total number reached was 169,353. The largest record for any one day was the August Bank Holiday, when 72,000 persons entered the grounds. For the Fisheries Exhibition the grand total was 2,703,051, so that the figures for the present year show an increase of a little over 35 per cent.

## GREEK.

GREEK is, perhaps, the most perfect instrument of thought ever invented by man, and its literature has never been equalled in purity of style and boldness of expression.

The very least curiosity spoken of in the papers is a wheel that came off a dog's tail when it was a waggin'. The man who has discovered it has retired from public life.

A WOMAN-LECTURER says woman's sphere is bound north by her husband, on the east by her baby, on the south by her mother-in-law, and on the west by a maiden aunt.

BIRTH is like the flash of lightning that breaks through the gloom of the clouds and glitters for a moment; cheerfulness keeps up a daylight in the soul, filling it with a steady and perpetual serenity.

THAN are no better cosmetics than a severe temperance and purity, modesty and humility, a gracious temper, and calmness of spirit; and there is no true beauty without the signatures of these graces in the very countenance.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CARLEFLOWER WITH CREAM SAUCE.—Separate the flower into small parts, wash carefully, and put on in well salted, boiling water; after boiling an hour, turn off water and add a pint of milk, a little boiling water, and a speck of salt; cook gently another half-hour, take up carefully, thicken the milk with a scant tablespoonful of flour, with a tablespoonful of butter previously made into a smooth paste. Pour over the cauliflower, and serve. Onions are delicious treated in the same style.

GOD'S HEAD AND SHOULDERS will eat much finer by having a little salt rubbed down the back, and along the thick part, even if it be eaten the same day. Tie it up, and put it on the fire in cold water, which will completely cover it; throw a handful of salt into it. Great care must be taken to serve it without the smallest speck of black or scum. Garnish with a large quantity of double parsley, lemon, horse-radish, and the milk, rose, and liver, and fried smelts it approved. It with smelts be careful that no water hangs about the fish; or the beauty of the smelts will be taken off, as well as their flavour. Serve with plenty of oyster or shrimp sauce, and anchovy and butter.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

THE art of living easily as to money is to pitch your scale of living one degree below your means. Guard against the notion that, because pleasure can be purchased with money, therefore money cannot be spent without enjoyment. What a thing costs a man is no true measure of what it is worth to him; and yet how often is his appreciation governed by no other standard, as if there were a pleasure in expenditure *per se*! Feel a want before you provide against it. You are more assured that it is a real want; and it is worth while to feel it a little in order to feel the relief from it.

A DINNER of wine is proverbially a palace of silence; and the envy and hatred which all literary men really feel for each other, especially when they are exchanging dedications of mutual affection, always insure in such assemblies the agreeable presence of a general feeling of painful constraint. If a good thing occurs to a guest he will not express it, lest his neighbour, who is publishing a novel in numbers, shall appropriate it next month; or he himself, who has the same responsibility of production, be deprived of its legitimate appearance.

FLOWERS.—Much depends upon the arrangement of bouquets. The glasses and receptacles for flowers should always be chosen with a due regard for the manner in which the flower itself grows. A flower with a naturally long stem never looks well out of short and put into a shallow glass dish, or short stemmed flowers, like violets, elevated, we may say, to the top of a tall specimen vase. Low-growing flowers, as a rule, show to the best advantage when they are put into more in a shallow receptacle. Highly coloured glass or china vases are rarely suitable for holding flowers; the colour of the vase generally detracts from the beauty of the flowers. The vase should either be quite colourless, or if coloured, the tint should be similar to that of the flowers, not of a contrasting hue. Flowers, on the whole, look best in a plain glass vase. Nowadays a bad floral arrangement should be very rarely met with, as there are so many specimen glasses of different forms which should entirely supersede the elaborate statuary that used, at one time to grace, or disgrace, our dinner tables.

A HOLIDAY HAUNT.—Escaping southern Italy, there is no country which can compare with Greece in beauty and interest to the intelligent traveller. It is not a land for creature comforts, though the climate is splendid, and though the hotels in Athens are as good as those in any European town. It is not a land for society, though the society at Athens is excellent, and far easier of access than that of most European capitals. But if a man is fond of the large effects of natural scenery, he will find, in the Southern Alps and flocks of Greece, a variety and a richness of colour which no other part of Europe affords. If he is fond of the details of natural scenery, flowers, shrubs, and trees, he will find the wild flowers and flowering trees of Greece more splendid than anything he has yet seen. If he desires to study national character and peculiar manners and customs, he will find in the hardy mountaineers of Greece one of the most unaltered societies hardly yet affected by the great tide of sameness which is invading all Europe, in dress, fabrics, and usages. And yet, in spite of the folly still talked in England about brigands, he will find that without troops, or police, or patrols, or any of those melancholy safeguards which are now so obstructive in England and Ireland, life and property are as safe as they ever were in our most civilised homes. Let him not know a word of history, or of art, and he will yet be rewarded by all this natural enjoyment; perhaps, also, if he be a politician, he may study the results of a constitution made to order, and planted in a nation of no political training, but of high intelligence.—*English Illustrated Magazine.*

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- C. R. (Torquay).—We do not insert advertisements.
- BESSIE.—The young fellow is only laughing at you. Take no notice of him, and do not think about him.
- HARRY M.—Write to a sporting paper. We have no record of the longest jump ever made by a horse.
- C. M. F.—Crabs do not belong to the order of fish; they are crustaceans, while oysters are molluscs.
- WARLEY.—The international boat race between the Universities of Oxford and Harvard took place 27th August, 1869.
- QUEENIE.—1. The 22nd Dec., 1863, fell upon a Monday. 2. Good for the age. 3. Very pretty bright brown.
- S. A. T.—It would probably make her very ill, and she would not be likely, we should say, to repeat the experiment.
- T. M.—There is no such verb in English as "to lase" or "to laise." Its use is not a vulgarism; it is simply a freak of ignorance.
- C. B. D.—All you can do is to bide your time. Your turn will come, and as the poet said justly, "Everything comes round to the man that waits."
- A. P. M.—There seems to be nothing necessary for you to do but to call upon the young lady. We do not think that she will refuse to receive you. Do not be anxious to marry for a year or two.
- L. L. B.—If you are patient the young men will ask your brother to introduce him to you. Wait until he shows a little enterprise. It is his place to seek your acquaintance.
- FRITZ.—You should not be in a hurry to decide that question. You say that you are not now in a condition to marry. Wait till you are before deciding whether you will marry the girl to whom you refer or not.
- ONE IN SUSPENSE.—1. Certainly not. 2. Let him come to you; he will if he wants you. 3. It is a case for a doctor. It might arise from the cause named, but there are many others.
- E. S. H.—1. The portions in life would be quite equal. 2. We cannot oblige you. 3. No very great likelihood, rather the other way. 4. There is no meaning in dreams. 5. It arises from many causes.
- ANXIOUS INQUIRER.—1. The only way is to advertise your qualifications in a good paper, or call upon some good firms. 2. It is impossible to say, not knowing what you can do. Post-office work is not at all easy to attain, and requires considerable preparatory training.
- T. P. (Guernsey).—1. You are entitled to share and share alike with your brothers and sisters. 2. If the facts are as you state them, and the ticket was not an absolute gift, your mother has no right to retain the watch on your tendering her the money. Surely some arrangements can be come to in the matter.
- ANXIOUS JOAN.—Coloured silks may be cleaned in the following manner:—Take four ounces of soft soap, four ounces of honey, the white of an egg, and a wineglassful of best gin; mix well together, and scour the article thoroughly with rather a hard brush, afterwards rinse in cold water, leave to drain, and iron while quite damp.
- A. A.—We think that your brother-in-law acted very wrongly, and you should have put a stop to such familiarity at once and for ever. Do not allow any more of it, and you had better remain away from your sister's house until you learn a little better what is due to her and to yourself.
- E. C. G.—We scarcely think that this gentleman recommends himself by sending presents and messages through a mutual friend. You had better decline his gifts in future unless he shows more manliness and sincerity. What you have already accepted you had better keep. When he comes to see you have a quiet, friendly talk with him about his gifts.
- G. T.—You cannot claim the money except under the terms of the will, that is till one year after your mother's death. We presume it will be placed in the hands of trustees and invested, she receiving the interest as long as she lives, and after her death it will accumulate for yourself and sister. This is written, of course, in ignorance of the rest of the provisions of the will.
- O. C.—A widow usually wears very deep mourning one year, and then ordinary mourning for as long or short a period as she chooses. For a parent the period of mourning is one year, and the same period is usually observed for a brother or sister. It would be quite fitting for you to assume mourning for a guardian whom you loved. In this case three or six months would be sufficient.
- LETTER B.—1. Unless you can overcome the sound in your throat by eating very slowly and carefully we would advise you to consult a respectable physician. It probably arises from an enlarged gland that may have to be cut. 2. In such a case we think that the mother-in-law should write to her daughter-in-law as well as to her son. Where such a marriage is arranged and takes place at a distance from the friends of one of the parties, it is usual for some correspondence between the young lady and her husband's relatives to precede the marriage.
- E. B. W.—As you seem certain that the engagement should be broken your only wise and proper course is to write to the gentleman telling him so, in the fewest words possible, at the same time offering to destroy or return his letters, photographs and other mementos,

and asking him at once to return all your letters. If he is a truly honourable man he will comply strictly with your request. You will be acting unwisely if you keep as much as a flower or a scrap of ribbon connected in your mind with him.

B. W.—The French kilombtre is a little over three-fifths of an English mile, the kilogramme about two pounds and a fifth avoirdupois.

F. W. N.—There is no such absurd restriction; all who behave themselves may walk freely in any of the London Parks during the hours they are open to the public.

B. W. G.—Spoiled stamps, that is, stamps that have been spoiled accidentally and not used, are allowed for at Somerset House. You will learn the hours on application there.

E. G. G.—Never mind the railings of jealous spite and envy. You have enough to do to look after your own business, and should beg your so-called friend to mind hers.

C. C.—If you have lost the ticket you should apply at once to the pawnbroker for a form of declaration to be made before a magistrate, or he is bound to deliver the pledge to the producer of the ticket.

A. P. W.—If your parents approve of the young man and you love him, we see no reason why you should not accept him. The young man probably finds his enjoyment in his love for you and in your society.

P. C. C.—We advise you to take good care of what property you have, and to will it to your daughter in case of your death. You had better try to live peaceably and happily with your husband. He will probably improve as he grows older.

C. V. S.—You had better do nothing whatever to recall your recent ban. Do not allow your feelings to betray you. If the gentleman does not show more honour and sincerity it would be better for you to dismiss him entirely from your mind.

## AT THE HELM.

About the ship the flames dart round;  
Yet it was near to land  
That might be reached, could there be found  
A sailor who would stand  
As if upon his funeral pyre,  
And work with steady hand.

The captain shouted through the din:  
"John Maynard, can you guide  
The burning ship in safety in?"  
"I'll try," John Maynard cried.  
And though the fire, with forked tongue,  
Seemed off the sailor to overwhelm,  
Silent those sweeping flames among,  
John Maynard still stood at the helm.

The ship is in: they hurrying pass  
From off the grave it seems to be—  
And all are saved but one, alas!  
Who saved them all—and he,  
John Maynard, now a blackened mass,  
Falls forward in the sea.

M. S. L.

BESSIE RAY.—Judging from your letter, it is not likely that your chance for getting a situation as governess would be very good. Your education seems to be defective. Still, you might get a situation to take care of very young children.

LAURA G.—Your friend is acting very unwisely. The man with whom she is corresponding may be a thorough villain. A lady should never enter into a correspondence with a man unless she is assured of his respectability and trustworthiness beforehand.

R. T. B.—We cannot advise you to take any steps to improve your complexion, except to protect yourselves from exposure to the sun and wind, to use simple preparations, such as cold cream or vaseline, at night on your faces, and plenty of cold water at all times. Freckles can be removed in many ways. We have frequently given receipts.

MARIE.—It is very indiscreet and improper for a young lady to correspond with a stranger. When a lady is engaged to be married to a gentleman with the consent of her parents she may engage in sentimental correspondence with him. It is very foolish for her to indulge in sentimental correspondence with any but her betrothed. Drop your correspondence at once. Your mother will give you good counsel in such matters. Go to her.

A. W. G.—Dieting by itself will never improve your "wind" and endurance as a runner. The only successful course will be to exercise steadily, but not to such a degree as to leave you exhausted and languid afterwards, and to eat only just what you require of nourishing and wholesome food. Most trainers entirely prohibit alcohol and tobacco, and those who do tolerate their use at all allow only a very small quantity. Raw eggs are digestible and nourishing, and, if not disagreeable to you, may form a regular part of your diet.

R. M.—1. It is not necessary to leave a margin in writing letters of either business or friendship, but it is often a convenience to have a margin for notes with a business letter, and some think that a space at the left improves the appearance of any letter. This is, however, a matter of taste. 2. The term natural science is vague. It may be taken to include every science except theology and metaphysics, but it usually means those

sciences relating to external nature. 3. The infinitive "to deceive" is the subject of the verb "is" and "children" is the object of the infinitive "to deceive." 4. The thoroughly practical science of surveying could not be carried on without algebra, and every practical builder and engineer must either know algebra or work by rules deduced by algebra, without understanding them. 5. A married woman should be addressed by her husband's name, as Mrs. John Smith.

CORINNE.—You had better divert your mind from this young lady and endeavour to establish yourself in some good paying business or employment. When you have the means to support a wife you will not have much difficulty in finding one.

E. B. C.—The next exhibition to be held at South Kensington is to be devoted to inventions of all kinds and musical instruments. It ought to be very interesting; but whether it will prove as attractive as its predecessors it is impossible to say.

L. L.—If you are in a position to marry you can freely unfold your love and ask the lady to marry you. It is not a good plan to go a-courting until you have the means to support a wife. If you are not ready to marry you had better be a little slower with your wooing.

ALLIE E.—You are too young to get married for a few years yet. That is our candid opinion on the subject, drawn from considerable experience. There would be no harm in your becoming engaged, if your parents and the young lady are willing that you should. A youth of nineteen is hardly old enough to act wisely in such a matter without availing himself of his parents' more mature judgment.

YOUNG ASPIRANT.—The incident is said to have taken place as follows:—The gallant Sir Walter Raleigh is said to have written on a window-pane with his diamond—

"Faith would I climb, but that I fear to fall."  
The queen coming by, and reading the line, immediately capped it with—

"If thy heart fail thee do not climb at all."

R. D. G.—To produce a perfect skeleton leaf take four ounces of washing soda, and two ounces of lime. Slack the lime in a little water, add one quart of rain water, boil this one hour. Drain off, and in the clear liquid place the leaves. Boil gently for one-half to one hour; then removing one at a time, take the flesh off with a camel's hair pencil in water. Cleanse in several waters and bleach in chloride of lime water. The latter is made as follows: Dissolve one half-pound of chloride of lime in three pints of rain water; let it stand two hours; when dissolved, use two tablespoonfuls to one pint of water. When bleached float the leaves on paper in water. When nearly dry press them.

P. W. R.—When children under seven years of age die in Brazil, their bodies, in full dress, are exposed in procession through the streets, the cheeks being painted, the head crowned with artificial flowers, and the whole figure sometimes dressed in imitation of an angel, with expanded wings of tinsel and gauze. In the happy persuasion that

"With souls enlarged to angels' size,"

such are only translated to the blessedness of Heaven, their death is not regarded as a just cause of sorrow, but of joy; and visits of congratulation are paid, we are told, to the parents by their friends, and festivities of the gayest character take place, not even excepting music and dancing.

L. B. D.—Special marriage licences are granted by the Archbishop of Canterbury on application through a Proctor at the Faculty Office, Doctors' Commons, London. But they are only granted under special circumstances. No banns are, of course, required, and the marriage may take place in a particular church without previous residence in the district; but the reasons assigned must be such as to meet his Grace's approval. The fees average £29 3s. The cost of an ordinary marriage licence is, in London, £3 2s. 6d.; in the country, from £2 12s. 6d. to £3 3s. No banns need be published in this case either, but one of the parties must have lived for fifteen days in the parish in which the marriage is to take place.

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London: Published for the Proprietor, at 234, Strand, by J. B. SPICK; and Printed by WOODFALL and KINGS, Milford Lane, Strand.